

THE
ATTITUDE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS
TO GREEK PHILOSOPHY
AS EXEMPLIFIED IN
IRENÆUS OF LYONS
TERTULLIAN OF CARTHAGE
AND
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

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NOTE :

Quotations from the translated works of Irenæus, Tertullian and Clement in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library are followed throughout by the page number and volume referred to, the latter being indicated by the small Roman numerals in brackets.

I

INTRODUCTION

The task here set for us, namely, to ascertain the nature of the encounter between Christianity and Greek philosophy in the period specified would be less difficult in itself if we came to its consideration with our minds unhampered by the opinions which have been given and the conclusions reached concerning it. We have mainly to bear in mind that the individual Christian thinkers with whom we shall have to deal lived through that period of transition in the development of Christianity in which many things we regard as normative had been neither formalized nor stamped with the seal of later orthodoxy.⁽¹⁾ The Creed which some of us repeat, for instance, while in process of evolution, had not as yet been reduced to standard form.⁽²⁾ Indeed, those second and third century pioneers in the realms of Christian thought express themselves occasionally in terms that would certainly have startled and would not in all likelihood have been tolerated by the later Fathers of the Church.

Despite the effort to approach the subject in a quite detached frame of mind, one cannot but be conscious of the actual outcome of

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- (1) It was, according to Harnack, the struggle with Gnosticism that compelled the Church to formulate its standards of orthodoxy and led directly to Catholicism. (What is Christianity? p. 207.)
- (2) We can, however, sense the movement in this direction from the change that comes over the meaning of the word "faith" in the New Testament. In the earlier period it signifies simply one's attitude toward God, with the idea of trust, as Luther thought of it; but it begins in a comparatively short time to imply acceptance of a credal formula, for example, the progression in thought from Matt., XVII:20, Mark, XI:22, Luke, XVII:5 and Acts, III:16, where we find *ἐὰν ἐχετε πίστιν* throughout, to Jude, 3, *τῇ ἀνάξ παραδόσει τοῖς ἀγίοις πιστέι*. Cf. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, i, pp. 89-90.

events as recorded in history. The mere possibilities inherent in the original situation have long since passed into accepted actualities and these, we are aware, present a problem which is far from new and as far as ever, it appears, from being solved, a problem which has led in Christendom to a situation variously assessed by those who adhere to different points of view. The problem, for instance, is stated with clarity and an assessment of it given by a contemporary Scottish philosopher.⁽¹⁾

"Christian theology," he writes, "is the product, in the first instance, of an alliance in the theoretical field of Christian experience and Stoic philosophy. It has often been asserted that Stoicism was the mediating factor between Christianity and European thought; that the Stoic philosophy was a half-way house to Christianity and paved the way for the acceptance of Christianity. Yet the opposite is the truth. Stoicism was the means by which Christianity was corrupted in Europe and side-tracked into dualism..."⁽²⁾

Further on again⁽³⁾ he says:

"It was as the reflective aspect of the Roman consciousness that Stoicism became the basis of "Christian" theology. The emergence

(1) John Macmurray.

(2) The Clue to History, p. 138. This is, of course, to some extent, a simplification. There was a great deal more than Stoicism in what Christianity took over from its pagan environment. According to Harnack (What is Christianity? p. 201), the first real influx of Hellenism began about 130 and was confined to Greek Philosophy per se, the latter leading by gradual stages (op.cit., p. 205) to what he calls "acute Hellenization". By 220 or 230 the second stage had begun involving the invasion by Christianity of all the other elements in Greek religious culture. Harnack describes this final synthesis as a closely woven web by which the simple Christian faith was overlaid.

(3) The Clue to History, p. 144.

of "theology" proves that the Christian Church had fallen a victim to dualism⁽¹⁾ and become conformed to "the fashion of this world". Are these the impartial facts and are they all the facts? Is this what the encounter between Hellenistic culture and the Christian Gospel did actually produce and, if so, is the resultant state of affairs to be considered thus calamitous for Christianity?

A further question comes to mind. Was this result, however, judged or viewed in retrospect, the outcome of a conscious or deliberate human interference in the sequence of events, or were the actors in the drama simply doing what, in the given circumstances, anyone could have had no other choice but do?⁽²⁾ Macmurray goes on to assert that

"...the substance of Christianity remains embedded in the life of Europe whatever interpretation we give it. Christianity remains itself, as the intention to realize the universal community which is the reality of human life. That intention, which comes from the Hebrew culture, is embedded like leaven in the races of Europe, and works as a ferment in them."⁽³⁾

- (1) Harnack maintains that the Gospel rests on a dualism whose origin remains inexplicable, although he testifies to the conviction of an underlying unity. (What is Christianity? pp. 149-150.) The said conviction, he argues, springs out of our experience as moral beings and it is within ourselves that we must realize the unity of whose existence at the beginning and the end and underlying all things we are morally convinced (op.cit., pp. 151, 159). The ultimate resolving of this dualism is for him in essential Christianity, i.e. in the heart and centre of the Christian religion which lives on no matter of what varied sort the bark or outside covering may be (op.cit., p. 191).
- (2) F.J. Foakes-Jackson inclines to the idea of deliberate assimilation by the Church: "The Triumph of Christianity by its complete absorption of all mental and religious activities in the Roman world is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of mankind." (History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, p. 180.) (Italics my own.)
- (3) The Clue to History, p. 122.

Would this still be true, as the writer considers it to be, if Christianity had not been carried over into the life of Europe as, in point of fact, it was? Is future progress simply a matter, then, of our ability to disentangle the essential Gospel from the allegedly non-essential elements which, it is claimed, in the historic process have become attached to it.⁽¹⁾ Is it purely a question of de-philosophizing what is assumed to have been an originally pure faith?⁽²⁾ Even if this should be desirable, would it now be possible? If it were possible, would it produce the desired results? Direct appeal to the original historic situation, pregnant as it was with all these possibilities, might furnish the answers to our questions. We can, at least, go back and see; but, before proceeding to do so, let us consider some of the issues raised in somewhat greater detail.

The dualism charged with the downfall of simple or essential Christianity has for us become the crux of a controversy that engages much of the energy and attention of contemporary theologians; but the contest has been waged in one form or another, and with varying intensity down through the centuries, the dualism of Church and State,⁽³⁾ for instance, which is simply, according to Macmurray,⁽⁴⁾ the outward expression of the dualistic mode of thinking we have inherited from the past, and mainly from the Greek thought-forms and attitudes which, for reasons we must still consider, entered into free association with early Christianity. Responsibility for the dualism in question

(1) Harnack believes so. Vide *What is Christianity?* pp. 192-193.

(2) But it remains more than questionable whether the Gospel in an originally unadulterated purity is, in fact, recoverable in this sense.

(3) Lietzmann seems to consider this dualism as germane to Christianity. (*The Founding of the Church Universal*, p. 53.)

(4) *The Clue to History*, pp. 121f.

cannot, in Macmurray's estimate, be attributed to the Hebrew culture out of which the teaching of Jesus grew.⁽¹⁾ What we distinguish as the Natural and the Supernatural, He does not differentiate. What we usually regard as separables, He refuses to separate.⁽²⁾

If Jesus' approach to reality, it is conceivable, had been consistently kept in view, there need not have been that cleavage between science and religion⁽³⁾ which has proved the most disturbing manifestation of the dualism that runs through the whole texture of our lives and at the present time finds expression in the verbal signposts indicating where the battle is still waged - Reason and Revelation: Knowledge and Faith: Philosophy and Religion: Nature and Grace: Matter and Mind: Body and Soul: secular and sacred: the Real and the Ideal.

Modern Christology also joined in the debate. Thus it became necessary to distinguish 'comme deux Christes', the one, the historical prophet who had few claims on the reverence of posterity, and the other, the object of the Church's worship, a non-historical, dying and rising

- (1) Yet Bultmann contends that, despite its value for ensuring the rootedness of the Christian faith in history, it was the possession and use of the Old Testament in the early Church which first gave rise to the problem of reason and revelation. (Theology of the New Testament, i, p. 118.)
 - (2) Vide E.C. Rust, Nature and Man in Biblical Thought, pp. 161-163, and W.R. Inge, The Religious Philosophy of Plotinus and Some Modern Philosophies of Religion, pp. 18-19.
 - (3) William Temple, Nature, Man and God, pp. 46-47. "But Jesus of Nazareth taught men to see the operation of God in the regular and normal--in the rising of the sun, the falling of the rain, the growth of the seed into the plant. If men had been ready to follow him in this, much of the actual conflict between Religion and Science would have been avoided. But His wisdom remained high out of reach till Science itself supplied the ladder, and led us to see God at work, if at all, not only now and then, but everywhere and always."
- Macmurray's point of view in regard to Science and Christianity is substantially the same.

Saviour-God. Historical criticism confirms the dualism. It deals with "truths of fact, while religion deals with truths of faith", the former 'theoretical', the latter 'practical'. The criterion here is, "What belief has the value of truth for me?+++a radical dualism."⁽¹⁾

Some of the more familiar of the dualist antitheses are derived, undoubtedly, from the currents of Greek thought. The widespread conception of matter as the antithesis of Spirit, for example, is hardly Christian if the doctrine of the Incarnation really means anything at all. W.H.V. Reade warns us that we must beware of the "non-Christian and, indeed, anti-Christian assumption that in matter or body there is something essentially debased, something hostile to spirit, something alien from and independent of the creative power of God. Along with this gratuitous concession to pagan tradition, as he puts it, goes a dubious conception of immortality implying that the soul is a lodger or prisoner in the body⁽²⁾ from which in due course it will take its leave".⁽³⁾

"Uncharitable as it would be," he writes, "to suggest that all the earnest men who lifted up their voices against The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man were on the same intellectual level as those who still greedily scan the almanacs and newspapers which deal in astrological predictions, unwittingly, I believe, they were influenced far more by notions of matter, body and life derived from Greek philosophers, Gnostics, Manicheans and so forth, than by any authentically Christian doctrine."⁽⁴⁾

(1) The Religious Philosophy of Plotinus, pp. 23-24.

(2) This was a leading idea of the Pythagoreans and the Gnostics but it had come to be the dominant conception in the Greek outlook on life.

(3) The Christian Challenge to Philosophy, p. 131.

(4) Ibid., p. 132.

The reference to "Gnostics"⁽¹⁾ here recalls one of the main factors in the development of Christian theology. The Greek philosophy we conventionally associate with Plato and Aristotle was not, of course, originally the creation of the Greeks. Its origins are Asian⁽²⁾ to a very marked degree, especially that branch of it which just before and subsequent to the birth of Christ contributed its quota to the religious syncretism of the age in the name of Pythagoras.⁽³⁾ Most of the leading Stoics were of kindred derivation, and when Rome threw wide her gates to every Oriental creed or cult, the steady procession of Eastern Gods, theologies and philosophies brought Gnosticism in its train.

The latter is not, according to Bultmann, a "phenomenon that first appeared within the Christian Church." It cannot properly be regarded as a speculative Christian philosophical tradition, nor as the "acute

- (1) The Gnostics were the "Higher Critics" of the Old Testament and the precursors of the Christian theologian.
- (2) Jewish thought after the captivity is greatly affected by Persian speculations. The latter are also responsible for the most outstanding of the Gnostic heresies - that of Manes who fathered monastic asceticism and the doctrine of predestination. Gnosticism was the medium by which Buddhism made its influence felt on Christianity, especially in Alexandria. (F.J. Foakes-Jackson, History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, p. 126.)
- (3) Vide Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica, X:IV; 466-471, and A.H. Armstrong, An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy, p. 6, where he says of the Italian School, inaugurated by Pythagoras, that it reveals "the passionate, sectarian, ascetic religion of the Orphics". Their leading belief is that man is "a blend of divine and earthly nature", and their sole aim is "the purification and release of the divine element". The soul is an imprisoned God doomed to follow the wheel of reincarnation endlessly unless finally set free. Purification, asceticism, union with the God, Zagreus, the Feast of Flesh and Gnosis "which is the knowledge of the correct magical formula securing escape upwards into the world of Gods constituted the Pythagorean Brotherhood". Perfection lies in truth and the power to attain this; the intellect is what makes the soul divine. Cf. F.J. Foakes-Jackson, History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, p. 196.

Hellenization" of Christianity, as Harnack has supposed, but "has its roots in a dualistic redemption-religion which invaded Hellenism from the Orient. Seen as a whole, it is a phenomenon parallel or competitive to the Christian religion. Each of these movements, the Gnostic and the Christian, influenced the other in many ways..."⁽¹⁾

St. Paul and the Fourth Evangelist were, no doubt, quite aware of the relation to the Gospel of those dialectic borrowings but was the ordinary Christian, then, or in succeeding centuries? What of the later generations of believers who were prepared to stake their lives and their salvation on the dogma of the literal inspiration of those Scriptures which contain not a little of this adapted material and were for long transmitted without benefit of the searching historical and theological criticism to which Bultmann and others have of late subjected them, even supposing the critics cannot claim finality for everything they say?⁽²⁾

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- (1) Theology of the New Testament, i, pp. 109f. On this assumption he sets out to show us in impressive enough detail how far the influence of Gnostic principles was felt in the early Church, (Theology of the New Testament, i, pp. 164f.), and how up to a point the use of Gnostic terminology for dialectic purposes resulted in some of those principles and some part of that terminology being associated with the proclamation of the faith. The Gospel of John is cited as affording numerous examples of this Gnostic-Christian exchange, and Bultmann abounds with further illustrations from the Epistles of St. Paul and the other Johannine literature. (Op.cit., loc.cit., and pp. 168-171, 174-175, 178, 180, etc.) Vide also Knox, Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, pp. 67f. and context, also Harnack, What is Christianity? p. 207, where he contends that the early Church invented certain theories to rebut the claims of Gnosticism but in the course of the struggle came to regard the theories themselves as the Gospel it was seeking to defend: *victi victoribus*, he comments, *legem dederunt*.
- (2) Cf. for example expressions like "principalities" and "powers" (Ephesians, VI:12) which Paul is surely manipulating to discredit Gnosticism in the eyes of the credulous and to commend thereby his "more excellent way" in Christ and popular conceptions of the text even in our own day.
- According /

In due course the Church officially rejected Gnosticism and for us, so far as concerns the Scriptures, only the verbal relics of the encounter now remain: but there is every probability that certain of its ideas have entered into the stream of Christian thought. Nor did the system as such simply die a natural death (heresies have a way of outliving those who embraced or rejected them). It survives in the modern schools of Anthroposophy which re-echo the old Gnostic self-sufficiency, pride in superior knowledge and disaffection from the traditions of the institutionalized Christian Church.⁽¹⁾

Dean Inge has contended that, apart from any specified context within which dualism appears, it has come in itself to constitute a special threat to reason in our day resulting in what he calls the "revolt of the natural barbarian in civilized man"⁽²⁾ against reason and intellectualism. This surely is, if true, the absolute reductio ad absurdum of dualism itself, that, having ousted the non-rational, reason should in its turn be ousted by that blind irrationalism which is the enemy of both.

Clement C.J. Webb puts the matter in a somewhat different light

(2) continued from previous page:

According to Moffat, interpretations of the heresy which Paul was combatting at Colossae (see context) vary from Haupt's thesis that the heresy in question was simply a phase of contemporary Judaism, to Jülicher's view that there is no specifically Jewish influence detectable at all. Moffat's own choice of theory is that of Friedländer who, he feels, has satisfactorily proved "the existence of an incipient pre-Christian Gnosticism in some form or other within Judaism. (Der Vorchristliche Jüdische Gnosticismus, 1898.) Vide Moffat, The Historical New Testament, pp. 216-217, footnotes.

(1) E.g., the Rudolph Steiner School in Germany and elsewhere.

(2) Plotinus, p. 14. "The pride of the 'intellectuals'," Inge comments, "has, indeed, received a blow. They have learned that the ingrained mental habits of fifty thousand years are not to be destroyed by the labours of a few University professors." (In loc.)

but withal forcibly in describing the French Revolution as the direct outcome in the sphere of politics of the dualistic forces emanating from the mind and life, especially the emotional life of man. The Revolution, he contends, was the explosion of the combined forces of Rationalism and of the Sentimentalism which opposed Rationalism and, in due time, subjected it. Where Rationalism had undermined religious and political belief, Sentimentalism operating in the sphere which Rationalism had ignored, that of emotional attachment to the traditional religious and social institutions, reacted with devastating consequences on the structure of French society, at the time and afterwards.⁽¹⁾

Does our investigation promise a complete or even a partial answer to involved questions of this kind, an answer, for instance, to the comparable state of affairs observable in contemporary Christendom whose divisions are in a sense the reflex of a dualism existing in the minds of those who think for or about the Church. Can the dualism be resolved? Temple has stated plainly, and with obvious cogency, that to go, as does the Christian religion, on the assumption that the ultimate ground of the universe and all things in it is spiritual is "a claim, not only for the independence of Spirit, but for the universal supremacy of Spirit. It is the claim that Spirit not only is a source of initiation, one ἀρχή among others, but is the only ultimate source of the whole World-process"...and that "the only remaining alternative is the acceptance of limitation in the conception

(1) A Century of Anglican Theology, pp. 18-19.

According to Dillistone, a brand new dualism has emerged out of what he calls the modern organic outlook (man's life in dependence on nature) on the one hand, and the technological outlook (man's consciousness of control over natural forces) on the other. (The Communication of the Christian Faith, p. 15.)

of the Supreme Spirit, not only in the sense of an actual finitude which none the less includes or controls all existence, but in the sense of having some part of existence outside its control".⁽¹⁾

Discursive reason⁽²⁾ may and does create conceptual divisions but we still feel in experience the need to posit an underlying unity. An ultimate ground of being that turned out to be a combination of irreconcilables would not be ultimate. It would deny the Incarnation, and without that there could be no point in our argument and not much meaning in our Faith, or, for that matter, in human existence as a whole.

This is for us much more than a purely academic problem involving a mere suspension of judgment at the worst. It threatens life itself where survival poises for man precariously between a religion that, largely divorced from its "prophetic" role, has relegated action to the non-religious or the purely a-religious sphere, and a science which pursues its own selected objects and its own specialized activities without very serious consideration for the ultimate reality whose purpose and intention is the proper goal of the scientist as it is of history.

However the historic process which, it is claimed, converted Christianity into Christian Theology be viewed, the fact remains that

(1) Nature, Man and God, pp. 37-38.

(2) The ultimate reality in question may, it is suggested, have eluded much of our modern speculation for the simple reason that it will not yield to the methods of pure science or the laws of formal logic, because it is not idea but spirit, and, therefore, personal. It is here, according to one recent school of thought, that the first move must be made. It is asserted that the discursive reason requires itself to be redeemed, a spiritual gnosis being indicated as the way out of the impasse. Vide E. Hermann's Eucken and Bergson: Their Significance for Christian Thought, pp. 211ff.

tension within Christianity itself is one of the most obvious results, the tension between action and reflection, behaviour and contemplation. The two strands in resultant theological development have always had their advocates and their committed followers, the Pistics who, on the one hand, exclusively take their stand on Revelation and on Faith and who, if not in wholehearted agreement with Tertullian that philosophy is the handiwork of devils, at least give it a wide berth and, on the other hand, the Gnostics who are all for some sort of alliance or co-operation with the seekers after truth. The labels which one now almost instinctively attaches to these two different groups are sometimes, however, a trifle ambiguous. Reason and Revelation is more accurately expressive of the Christian Gnostic point of view in which both Natural Theology and revealed religion are acknowledged as different aspects of the same Reality and recognized as having their respective, complementary parts to play. Reason or Revelation better sums up the opposing school of thought, according to which reason can be given so much prominence as to be detrimental to that salvation which is by faith.

In modern European thought the Gnostic strain is represented by a certain intermittent variation on the main underlying theme and, while this subsequent development cannot be dealt with here in anything like adequate detail, a brief glance at the forms the modern Gnostic principle assumes will clear the ground for our investigation of the Culture-Christianity situation later on.

Gnosticism has more recently proclaimed itself as life struggling upwards out of the dim, primordial depths to reach its full flowering in man and, beyond man, in deity (Schelling): as Natural Revelation

or human discovery of God and the spiritual world, i.e., as religious enlightenment based on subjectivism which replaces the Word of God (Schleiermacher):⁽¹⁾ as "thinking in pictures" (Croce), as reason (which furnishes the right form) justifying faith (which furnishes the right content), as the dialectical necessity of evil to divine being, as an entente cordiale between philosophy and faith (Hegel):⁽²⁾ as natural endowment, with man as the measure of all things, and resultant Solipsism (Feuerbach): as philosophy shaped by Christian faith and interpreted as baptized Hellenism (where Jesus, however, has no finality for faith) and, in the end, as the syncretism of all the higher ethical religions (Troeltsch, Weiss and others adhering to this view),⁽³⁾ in short as Kultur-Protestantismus which has numbered amongst its devotees Abelard and Leibnitz; Eucken and Rickert; Kant and Windelbandt.⁽⁴⁾

Over against the Gnostics we have, firstly, Ritschl (aptly described as the "last of the Church Fathers") who opposed speculation, mysticism and Natural Theology, re-emphasized the historical content of Christianity, advocated a thoroughgoing Christocentrism and insisted on the primacy of faith even for true understanding of the matters dealt with by theology. He probably initiated the later Reformed

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- (1) The only real difference between God and man, according to Schleiermacher, is the difference between wisdom and ignorance. God is responsible for the sense of sin which is implanted in our nature in order to spur us on to higher things. Sin is conceived as a sort of stepping stone to man's ultimate perfection in a process of gradual spiritual development.
- (2) "In the age-long controversy between the Hebrew Spirit and the Greek, his sympathies," says H.R. Macintosh, "lay wholly on the side of Hellenism." Vide Types of Modern Theology, p. 110.
- (3) Gunkel, Bousset, Wrede.
- (4) The succession is continued in Berdyaev, Tillich, Heidegger, Whitehead and Bultmann for the Gnostics and in Pascal, Schweitzer, Barth, Sabatier and Buber for the Pistics.

doctrine of Justification by Faith and set in motion the currents of thought resulting in modern existentialism where his position is reflected in the idea of the immediacy of experience, the divine-human encounter, the "I-Thou" relationship between the soul and God. Luther and Calvin, Harnack, Hermann and Kierkegaard are among the champions of the tenets advocated by this school.⁽¹⁾

The principal expression of the dualistic trend farther back in history is the emergence, at the higher level, of Greek Intellectualism which first appears in the Apologists of the second century and, quickened as a consequence of the struggle with Gnosticism, grew increasingly prominent. Christianity, according to Harnack, became doctrine, an idea associated in men's minds with the whole range of human knowledge,⁽²⁾ and faith was equated with possessing the right formula. Knowledge is now identified with the highest good and even spirit is defined in terms of that which knows.⁽³⁾

The clash of Gnostic and Christian claims in the first and second centuries constituted, as Bigg has indicated, a major crisis in the history of the Church.⁽⁴⁾ Yet the mass of believing Christians were,

(1) Any assessment of the process which resulted in the so-called theologizing of a so-thought pre-theological Christianity will depend upon which school of thought one happens to prefer. Adherents of the Ritschlian persuasion are committed to regarding Gnosis as the intellectual twilight of a truly living faith in Christ, while followers of culture Christianity are apt to think of their fellow-Christians in the other camp as Clement of Alexandria did of the anti-intellectuals of his age.

(2) Harnack, *What is Christianity?* pp. 228-229.

(3) *Op.cit.*, *loc.cit.*

(4) *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 62. Gnosticism, comments the author, "in the second century while it was yet living and aggressive...constituted a danger greater than the Arian controversy, greater than any peril that has ever menaced the existence of the faith..." "the very existence of the traditional religion was at stake," says Harnack (*op.cit.*, p. 208).

in all probability, as vaguely conscious, if not oblivious to the nature of the conflict being waged as are, say, the majority of Church-members in the present century to issues like dialectical materialism or non-theistic existentialism or "spiritual revolution in the East" or cosmological speculation as conceived by the contemporary scientific mind. The thinking Christian, however, in those portentous centuries, could not be indifferent. Greek culture pressed everywhere upon him, like the atmosphere, whether he desired it so or not. It is in a very real sense much the same for us today. Indeed, the Christian hope of the ultimate salvation of all men, not to mention the immediate well-being of humanity as a whole, may to a very great, though unpredictable extent, depend at the present time on the integrity of the thinking Christian and the spirit which he brings to the task allotted him. The promises of God are, surely, not just to a Church which has faith as a grain of mustard seed but to the Church which over and above can give a reason for its faith.

There was throughout the period within which this study falls a constant challenge to the Christian Church from that wider movement of philosophy which represents one of the unique features of the age. Philosophy, which by this time had developed largely into a speculative syncretism, was gathering its remaining strength for a revival of its power and pride of life.⁽¹⁾ This ambitious, if somewhat artificial, undertaking bore, as we now can see who are in a position to be wise after the event, the seeds of its eventual dissolution in itself.

Plato had striven in his generation to relate the Higher Knowledge

(1) Cf. F.J. Foakes-Jackson, History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, pp. 200f. It is probable that the rapid spread of Christianity had roused the latent forces of paganism.

to the life of everyday society and to the world of politics in order to train the best types of citizen for leadership in the State. The most acutely felt deficiency in the Roman empire (which was co-extensive with the Hellenistic world) turned out to be that of a spiritually dynamic principle, a universally acceptable religion which might, agreeably to imperial ambitions, gather the peoples into an ideological unity, and give them the consciousness of a common culture and a united goal in life. But, as it turned out, this role was not reserved for a resuscitated paganism in any shape or form, least of all in the mantle of classical Greek philosophy. The latter had been too long canalized along set intellectual lines which gained in depth and cultural enrichment for themselves; but at the heavy cost of separation from the world at large and loss of influence with the common run of men. The Schools, in short, were impotent in the sphere of ordinary people's lives.⁽¹⁾

At the historic moment we are dealing with, however, the final outcome was not, and could not, be definitely known. Here was the Church, a "little flock" still in the midst of a pagan world, facing a massive culture with a venerable tradition stretching back for centuries, a culture which had, at this very moment when the Church's own survival was anything but assured, bestirred itself for a concerted effort to possess the minds of men. The infant Church, however, was not only faced with this renaissance of paganism. The missionary Judaism of the Diaspora, under the able tutorship of Philo of Alexandria, had long since adopted the principle of accommodating

(1) Vide W.H.V. Reade, *The Christian Challenge to Philosophy*, pp. 10-11.

Hebraism to Hellenistic thought wherever there was any possibility of enlisting proselytes.⁽¹⁾ The revival of classical paganism was a serious enough challenge in itself. This further pressure from the side of Hellenistic Judaism put the young Church in an unenviable, if not a precarious, position. What would have been her future had she not contrived to meet the challenge of the hour? It was, according to Bultmann, a historic necessity that Christianity should be translated into a terminology with which society was conversant in that Hellenistic world..."to express convincingly to Hellenistic ears" Jesus' "eschatological meaning" and also the whole eschatological message and the eschatological dualism involved in it. Gnosticism and its myth⁽²⁾ offered a stock of terms that were intelligible to great numbers of people..."Here," concludes Bultmann, "our task is to set forth connectedly the extent to which the understanding of the Christian message in Hellenistic Christianity was unfolded by means of Gnostic terminology."⁽³⁾

D.G. Moses sees in the meeting of the Gospel with the culture of the ancient pagan world a very close parallel to the situation and the challenge that confront the young churches in a predominantly un-Christian environment today.⁽⁴⁾ "The Christian Gospel," he writes,

(1) Cf. Matt., XXIII:15.

(2) The Theology of the New Testament, i, p. 164.

(3) Gnosticism was present in the system of Philo from whom Paul and the Apologists learnt not a little, if similarity of language, even as the common property of an enlightened society, can be relied on as a guide. Paul, according to Bultmann, makes extensive use of Gnostic terminology to the extent of permitting himself to commit a Gnostic heresy, that, namely, of ascribing the origin of the Law (the Old Testament) to a power other than God Himself. (Vide The Theology of the New Testament, op.cit., loc.cit., and p. 176.)

(4) The problem of Greek culture for the early Church grew out of its essentially missionary character. The Jews successfully desecularized their faith by building the orthodox law about it but the price of isolation from the world had to be paid as a result.

with reference to missionary policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "had to be conveyed to the non-Christian in understandable terms. Was there anything in the non-Christian religions that could serve as a link, as a point of contact...? Elements of value were recognized in the non-Christian faiths, and Christianity was regarded as the final flower and fulfilment of the other religions..."⁽¹⁾ Passing over at this point to the comparable missionary situation in the twentieth century, he concludes, "The Christian's problem is how to lift up his Lord and Master before the wondering gaze of men, so that they may see in Him their own Saviour."⁽²⁾ The Word, he suggests, that became flesh must once more, indeed, we might add, must evermore, become flesh.

The process of adaptation recommended here was, in fact, outside of Christianity, a common feature of the early centuries. In pagan philosophy, for example, no man did more than Posidonius⁽³⁾ to tone down Stoicism, so that it might find contact with current cultural

(1) Article, Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions, in the International Review of Missions, Vol. XLIII, No. 170, April, 1954, p. 147.

(2) Op.cit., pp. 149-150.

(3) His teaching has been described as a form of "orientalized Stoicism" which, incidentally, reminds us that Greek philosophers also borrowed from Hebraic and other non-Occidental sources. Cicero is one of the few well-known ancient authors whose writings contain deposits of the system of Posidonius. Vide Posidonii Rhodii Reliquiae Doctrinae, p. 22, where Cicero is quoted, referring to Posidonius (Fin., I, 3) as "familiarem nostrum Posidonium". The Roman writer was a pupil of the latter while he lived at Rhodes c. 80 B.C. and his De Nat. Deor., II, reproduces part of a similar work attributed to his master.

Generally speaking, it would appear that Plato's Timaeus afforded a common stock of ideas for many of the ancient Greek philosophers, including Posidonius and Philo of Alexandria. Vide Knox, Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, p. 47, footnote (1) indicating this common substratum, e.g., in Philo, De. Mund., Op. 89-127.

ideas.⁽¹⁾ Hebraism was orientated in a similar direction. We read of the Jewish scribblers whose task, voluminously pursued, was to make Gentile proselytes, their writings being sprinkled liberally with names, associations, etc., taken from heathen mythology in order to prove that "Moses and his people were the original source of all civilization including the celebrated learning of the Greeks". Even commentaries on the Old Testament were got out in this style to make the Scriptures popularly attractive, and, in some places, more palatable.⁽²⁾ Not only had the Jews of Alexandria and elsewhere adapted Hebraism and Hellenism in this way; they also bequeathed ideas to Christianity through missionary Judaism,⁽³⁾ so that early indications are not wanting of the Gospel's progress along exactly similar lines. No better example of this consummation is to be found than the Apostle Paul himself. There is no need to presuppose a correspondence between him and Seneca,⁽⁴⁾ in order to account for the "stoicisms" embedded in the Pauline literature,⁽⁵⁾ so long as we bear in mind that, quite apart from direct indebtedness to Stoic philosophy, the proselytizing Saul was already adept in the use of Greek quotations and the usual literary embellishments expected by a Hellenistic audience as a means of making good his claim that the Jewish faith was the crown of Greek philosophy.⁽⁶⁾ His memorable speech at Athens⁽⁷⁾ is an

(1) Vide Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 143-144.

(2) Lietzmann, *The Founding of the Church Universal*, p. 81.

(3) Christianity even inherited the forms in use in the Hellenistic synagogues. Vide Lietzmann, *The Beginnings of the Christian Church*, pp. 150, 91-92, 96-97; Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament*, i, p. 65.

(4) Vide Aubertin, *Sénèque et Saint Paul*, Part III.

(5) Fully dealt with by Lightfoot in the Introduction to his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (1888).

(6) The training-schools of missionary Hellenistic Judaism provided all intending proselytizers, as they had, no doubt, provided Paul, with the usual dialectic stock-in-trade.

(7) Acts, XVII.

instructive case in point. It is, Foakes-Jackson says, "...of great importance as the earliest Christian 'apology' to the Greeks".⁽¹⁾

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Greek philosophy, the attitude to which on the part of the early Christian apologists we have set out to ascertain, was Greek philosophy of a somewhat unacademic type, had, in fact, as here envisaged, become a "Way"⁽²⁾ of life. It is a novel yet thought-provoking point of view which would equate adherence to the Epicurean or the Stoic persuasion as a sort of second or third century religious denominationalism.⁽³⁾

The Christian faith was obviously in the midst of a vast merger of religious and cultural ideas, battling for survival, threatened by the cross-currents of encroaching syncretism, powerless to make its message heard with full effectiveness through lack of the necessary media in that Graeco-Roman world where facilities for intercommunication were the wonder of the age. That world had already determined what the literary medium, at least, for the transmission of Christianity

- (1) Moffat, Commentary on Acts, p. 164. One commentator thinks that "nothing of all...the splendour of Greek culture displayed everywhere about Paul as he stood that day in the shadow of the Areopagus..." appealed "to his Semitic imagination". (F.C. Conybeare, in Hasting's D.B., i, p. 144, col. 2): but the Apostle's "semitic imagination" prompted him no less to speak as a Greek to Greeks. (Cf. i Cor., IX:22.) Even if the actual words used cannot be attributed to him, they at least express the construction that the author of Acts puts on the matter which is in itself significant. Vide also Foakes-Jackson's comparison of St. Paul to Tertullian. (Op.cit., pp. 165, 166.)
- (2) This adds significance to the description of Christianity in the Book of Acts, XIX:9, 23, as "the Way". (Italics mine.)
- (3) "You said of a man that he was a Stoic or an Epicurean as you say of a man now that he is a Calvinist or a Wesleyan." (Quoted by Reade in his Christian Challenge to Philosophy, p. 7, but without indication of the source.) Cf. op.cit., p. 8, "...it remains true that swearing allegiance to Zeno, or whichever master it might be, was more nearly analogous to the adoption of Wesleyanism or Calvinism than to taking up philosophy in the twentieth century as a subject of examination, or even as a professional career."

should be. When anti-Hellenists raise the cry of "Back to Galilee" they tend to overlook the fact that the New Testament, regarded solely as a book, is very much a product of its Hellenistic⁽¹⁾ environment. The words of Jesus in the Palestinian original come to the surface in our Gospels on significant occasions indicating that the communication of the Gospel to the world addressed by the Evangelists or St. Paul required its retranslation into Hellenistic Greek, the lingua franca of contemporary civilization as Greeks and Romans thought of it. This Hellenistic influence meets us, in fact, on the first page of the New Testament. Translation involved, moreover, not only the use of Greek as a bare literary medium but also assimilation of the Greek spirit and atmosphere. The Greek words at many points were subtly changed with meaning and that too was certain to communicate itself. What better illustration could be given than the utilization by the Alexandrian Jew, Philo, of the Logos concept which continues to elude precise definition yet contains so much of the content of Greek philosophic thought. Its wealth of meaning, its extreme flexibility as a cipher made it so readily acceptable, but this was precisely what could also make it potentially so dangerous for Christianity.

H. Richard Niebuhr in his "Christ and Culture" says that the problem posed in the title of his book "was present in Paul's struggle with the Judaizers and the Hellenizers of the gospel, but also in his effort to translate it into the forms of Greek language and thought". He quotes the definition Jacob Burckhardt gives of culture as "the sum of all that has spontaneously arisen for the advancement of material

(1) And, if Knox is to be relied on, already shows evidence of Hellenic borrowing, as regards both form and content. Vide Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, pp. 5, 10, etc.

life and as an expression of spiritual and moral life" being non-authoritarian and Burkhardt's comment to the effect that speech is the spearhead where such culture is concerned.⁽¹⁾ Lietzmann records agreement. "The translation of the Bible into Greek,"⁽²⁾ he says, "opened the door to the Hellenization of the Jewish religion. Greek conceptions inevitably entered along with the Greek vocabulary...It was an unplanned but unavoidable consequence of translation from one language into another and it came forward most prominently in Alexandria."⁽³⁾

Lietzmann's last statement raises one of the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter. Was all this inevitable?⁽⁴⁾ A simple "Yes" or "No" to such a question is not as simple as might, on first

(1) Niebuhr, op.cit., pp. 10, 31.

(2) He is thinking, of course, of the resultant Septuagint. (The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p. 89.)

(3) There and wherever the influence of the Alexandrian School was felt the Logos doctrine, according to W.L. Knox, was introduced by Hellenizing Judaism in order to eliminate the awkward Messiah-concept. (Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity, p. 40.)

(4) Harnack seems to accept this conclusion in some measure when he says: "Even had this youthful religion (i.e. Christianity) not severed the tie which bound it to Judaism, it would have been inevitably affected by the spirit and the civilization of that Graeco-Roman world on whose soil it was permanently settled." (What is Christianity? p. 199.) W.L. Knox expresses complete agreement (op.cit., supra, p. 1).

Kraemer appears to have no doubt of it at all. In an article by him in The International Review of Missions, Vol. XLIII, No. 171, July, 1954, entitled Syncretism as a Religious and a Missionary Problem, he says at p. 261: "...what happens in this absorption or adoption of extraneous elements" (Entlehnung) "is no attempt towards syncretistic equalizing, but the incorporation and use of these elements as the means of its (i.e. of Christianity's) own dynamism. This has nothing to do with syncretism for it issues from conscious reflection and effort. It is the inevitable result of occasional or rather long-term encounters between different spiritual worlds." The word "dynamism" employed here by Kraemer is vividly expressive of the role which the borrowed cult-forms have to fill. The latter are simply props and, if one may say so, propellers for Christianity.

thoughts, be supposed. Those who respond, for instance, with an emphatic negative can do so only on the assumption that the whole sequence and the entire sum total of events represent something which the human agents taking part in them could ~~(or could not)~~ deliberately × have chosen to control. The outcome, such people argue, might have been otherwise (meaning, one feels, that it would and should have been) if the wrong choice had not been made. Is this what the evidence requires us to believe?

To think of the situation on the other hand as lying outwith the sphere of human volition altogether is to subscribe to a determinist interpretation of events which renders the central question we are endeavouring to deal with more or less irrelevant. There can be no real point in asking what attitude the early Christian thinkers took up in regard to Greek philosophy, if, as it turns out, freedom of choice does not enter into it. A man can be neither praised nor blamed for doing or failing to do in a given situation that over which he has absolutely no control. Even to postulate God as the active principle in events is no solution if God, no less than circumstances, is responsible for the situation in advance. This is uncomfortably close to fatalism or crude determinism and further pursuit of the line of thought it leads to does not interest us here.

It is in the end very largely a matter of how one thinks of history. The Hebrew explained man and his human relationships sub specie aeternitatis, saw God's hand in everything, in the experience of the individual, in the life of the nation, in the fortunes that befall the nations with their far-reaching consequences and repercussions on the world. This frame of mind was communicated, as we

know, from Hebraism to Christianity in the first century through the Hebrew-Christian Church and helps us to understand the almost stereotyped character of the primitive Christian kerygma.⁽¹⁾ It is the view which as Christians we would, naturally, be more disposed to take. But this is not the same thing as saying that the drama of Jesus' life, reaching its climax and completion at the Cross, is merely the rehearsal of a detailed time-sequence worked out in advance, without regard for human motives, and so mechanically contrived. This sort of explanation may appeal to certain types of mind, but, in the end, it raises far more problems than it can ever hope to solve; and yet there is a sense in which, without being driven to this determinist extreme, we can and do acknowledge the hand of God in history, as did the Psalmist and the Son of Man himself. Jaeger has hinted at this reading of the facts in discussing the very period which concerns us when, discussing the subject of Greek culture in general, he says of the new Colleges and Schools that their true effect turned out to be quite different from what they had envisaged;⁽²⁾ "for after the final collapse of the independent Greek City-states, they created Western

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- (1) Beginning, as a rule, with a recapitulation of God's mighty acts and his judgments from of old followed by an appeal to the evidences of His latter-day activity with, usually, some reference to His further judgment on the ways of wicked men (cf. Acts, III: 12f., VII: 1f.).

How different this sounds from Paul's appeal to the Athenians (vide supra). It is the difference between the Jesus of early Hebrew-Christian adoration and the Christ of Hellenic-Christian speculation: the difference, expressed otherwise, between Gospel and Theology.

Bultmann describes the various declamations in this strain as "kerygmas", stereotyped or otherwise.

- (2) Plato's effort to make the highest powers of the spirit contribute to building up a new society and educating rulers.

Jaeger claims that Plato's ideas on the subject were copied by the Christian Apologists in their endeavours to relate the Gospel to Hellenistic humanism.

science and philosophy and paved the way for the universal religion, Christianity...Philosophy, science and their constant enemy, the formal power of rhetoric - these are the vehicles through which the spiritual legacy of the Greeks was transmitted to their contemporaries and successors in the East and West, and to which, above all else, we owe its preservation. They handed on that inheritance in the form and with the principles which it got from the fourth century effort to determine the nature of paideia - that is, it was the epitome of Greek culture and education and Greece made its spiritual conquest of the world under that motto..."; then most impressively he concludes, "...there falls on it the radiance of a providential wisdom".⁽¹⁾

The situation that prevailed throughout the Graeco-Roman world when Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria come into view was inevitable in this sense. The question to which we must now address ourselves is how far in responding to it, either consciously or unconsciously and each in his own way, they followed the progressive march of history, in keeping with what we, as Christians, believe God's purpose in history to be. But that is a question we can hope to answer only according to how they are found, on examination, to have answered it themselves.

(1) Paideia, ii, pp. 11-12. (Italics mine.)

I I

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

"Wherefore I do also call upon Thee, Lord God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob and Israel, who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God who, through the abundance of Thy mercy, hast had a favour toward us, that we should know, who hast made heaven and earth, who rulest over all, who art the only and true God, above whom is none other God; grant, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the governing power of the Holy Spirit; give to every reader of this book to know Thee, that Thou art God alone, to be strengthened in Thee, and to avoid every heretical, and godless, and impious doctrine."

Haer. III:VI; 27I(1)

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I. PREFATORY NOTE

(A) Christianity in Roman Asia

The year 70 A.D.⁽¹⁾ was fraught with destiny for early Christianity and ultimately for the world mission of the Church. The fall of Jerusalem at this memorable date proved one of the vital turning-points of all subsequent Church history. The new Israel of God, still mainly concentrated in and around the holy city, was dispersed, like the old Israel before it, throughout the Gentile world.

The fact of most significance in this connection is that the Christian faith was virtually recentralized, some would say reorientated, to a large extent at Ephesus,⁽²⁾ with Asia Minor as the vital sphere of operations⁽³⁾ from now on. The focal character and the formidable influence of the new settlement in those parts is evidenced by its increasingly conspicuous function as a sending church in relation to its pagan environment, much as we think today of the relationship between the older churches of the West and the so-called young churches sprung from them in the non-western world. Asia became, in fact, a bridgehead for a new and more intensive thrust by Christianity into its pagan hinterland. This presupposes a changed attitude from that held

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- (1) According to Lightfoot, the year approximately in which Polycarp was born. (Ap. Fathers, II, i, p. 438.)
- (2) This was the city of Heraclitus, and, in the first century, Swete tells us, it "abounded with persons who followed the profession of the philosopher or the rhetor, and added to its reputation as a seat of learning", but "the paramount power" there was religion. (Apoc., lx.) It was the scene, records Eusebius, of Justin's dialogue with Trypho. (H.E., XIV. 18. 5-6.)
- (3) Harnack regards the Church of Asia, centred on Ephesus as of equal status originally with the Church at Rome. (Mission, ii, p. 222.) It was only after Asia lost in the Paschal controversy, that Rome moved into the leading place. (Op.cit., ii, p. 225.)

held in the beginning by the Jerusalem Church, for instance, under the leadership of James, the brother of the Lord: but the exclusive concept of the nature of the Church had been undergoing steady transformation even before this, through the witness of Stephen and those sympathetic to his cause. The sterner logic of events clinched and concluded the argument. The Church was committed now by the destiny of history to go "into all the world".

One feature of this redistribution of the primitive Christian community which more than all others had (and may still have) quite incalculable possibilities for the future of the Faith, was the resultant founding of the "School of John" at Ephesus,⁽¹⁾ where the first really serious attempt was made to bring the Kerygma into some sort of harmonious relationship in literary form with the current categories of Hellenistic thought.⁽²⁾ To this famous school belonged Ignatius of Antioch, and "the blessed Polycarp" who stands out like some bold landmark in the sub-apostolic age.

- (1) The reference to Ephesus in Acts, XIX, is in itself significant of the city's religious pre-eminence. According to Eusebius (H.E., III. 1), when the Christians were scattered from Jerusalem, Asia was allotted to John, who died at Ephesus, relates Irenaeus, at an extremely advanced old age (*μεχρι των τριακον χρονων* : Haer., III:III; 264(i)), roughly about A.D. 100 (vide Haer., II:XXII; 201(i), footnote 4, Ed.). The identity of John himself has been variously assessed. Streeter concludes that he was John the Elder. (The Primitive Church, p. 107.) Harnack calls him "the unknown John". (Mission, ii, p. 222.)

Tradition indicates a strong concentration of the first apostolic band here or hereabout. Andrew, friend of John's youthful days, a fellow-native of Bethsaida, and, like him, a follower of John the Baptist, is said to have lived in Ephesus (Lightfoot, quoting the Canon Muratorianus, p. 33 (ed. Tregelles), in footnote 3 of his Apostolic Fathers, II, i, p. 438); likewise Philip of Bethsaida who, it is reported, died and was buried at Hierapolis in Phrygia. (Lightfoot, op.cit., loc.cit., footnote 4.)

- (2) It was at Ephesus in all probability that the canon of the four Gospels and perhaps the New Testament itself eventually took shape. (Harnack, Mission, ii, p. 225.)

The student of history is constantly reminded of the prestige of pro-consular Asia, the number and prosperity of whose cities had become something of a legend even before this time. Its teeming life and opulence, however, carried the gravest dangers and temptations for the Church. The Book of Revelation leaves us in no doubt about that.⁽¹⁾ Antioch and very probably Ephesus, situated in the chief battle-ground of warring cults and creeds, would seem in John's time to have been dormitories, if not veritable hotbeds of docetic Gnosticism,⁽²⁾ but this is not surprising when we recollect that the region lay across the cultural and commercial currents of the age under review. The cities of the Lycus valley stood on the great trade-routes from the East, those age-old avenues of both foreign commerce and exotic ideologies.

Here, on the other hand, the Jews of the Dispersion had already broken ground to the advantage of the Church.⁽³⁾ There were, furthermore, wide cleavages in religious and national life, without any strong, unifying force to resist invading influences; and, here, more than anywhere, Christianity had combined with Hellenism,⁽⁴⁾ not only in the realm of religious philosophy, but in every other sphere. The nett result of all these circumstances was that by the beginning of the 4th

(1) Rev. III:14-19.

(2) Crutwell, A Literary History of Early Christianity, i, p. 197; cf. Acts, XX:29-30... "grievous wolves"... "not sparing the flock". Marcion, who is reputed to have been the son of a ship-owner, was known to the Christians in Irenaeus' day as "the wolf of Pontus".

(3) By their contribution to an unusual Judaeo-pagan syncretism, represented by the worship of the *Θεός Σωτήρ*. (Harnack, Mission, ii, p. 182.)

(4) Asia Minor, says Hatch, was "the chief crucible for the alchemy of transmutation" between philosophy and Christianity (The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, p. 8); cf. Lietzmann who describes it as "the early homeland of Hellenistic Christianity". (The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 205.)

century A.D., the Christian faith had been adopted more widely and rooted more deeply in this locality than in any other comparable area of the empire ruled by Rome.⁽¹⁾ All the main topics of controversy and most of the great developments in second century Christianity had their origin hereabout. In Asia above all, "the deepest things which could be said of Jesus", Harnack tells us, "were composed."⁽²⁾

(B) The Church at Smyrna

The earliest reference to this Church occurs in the Book of Revelation.⁽³⁾ Smyrna was not, one gathers, of the same degree of economic or political importance as some of her near neighbours.⁽⁴⁾ The Christian community was poor⁽⁵⁾ and under constant pressure from persecution by the Jews (which may partly explain its poverty); but her treasure was in heaven, and she won the promised crown.⁽⁶⁾ Her greatest glory from the Christian standpoint was and remains her gift of Irenaeus to the Church and to the world.

Of great importance was her proximity to Ephesus,⁽⁷⁾ a centre of light and leading in the extensive neighbourhood. The School of John would probably be anti-Gnostic,⁽⁸⁾ if we can attach any weight to the

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- (1) Vide Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, i, pp. 87-88. With the exception of Cilicia, according to Harnack, Asia Minor was, in the pre-Constantine era, the Christian country ~~NOT~~ ^{ΕΞΟΧΗ}. (Mission, ii, p. 182.)
- (2) Op.cit., ii, pp. 183-184.
- (3) Rev. I:II; II:8.
- (4) As to sources for its founding and subsequent history, vide Swete, Apoc., lviii, and Harnack, Mission, ii, p. 186, footnote 1; p. 223. Yet, Lightfoot describes her as "the eye, the jewel, the crown of Asia". (Ap. Fathers, II, i, p. 673, 1885 ed.)
- (5) Rev. II:9.
- (6) Rev. II:10.
- (7) Ephesus and Smyrna were in direct communication by a great road which the Romans constructed shortly after their occupation of Asia. (Swete, Apoc., lviii.)
- (8) A Marcionite Church is supposed to have had its centre here. (Harnack, Mission, ii, p. 223.)

legends representing John and Polycarp at close quarters with the heretics.⁽¹⁾ Yet, Asian Christianity may have imbibed some of the ideas it opposed, a feature that led later critics and commentators to assume the Fourth Gospel itself to have been written in support of Gnosticism.⁽²⁾

The influence of the School of Ephesus could not but tell on all who had passed through it, and on all who, in turn, passed as pupils through their hands. Not only in regular quotation from the Fourth Evangelist, and frequent repetition of the Prologue as a recurring theme-idea, but in the emphasis he places on the incarnation of the Word,⁽³⁾ as well as the latter's bearing on his theological approach, the influence of Ephesus can be traced in Irenaeus' mind and thought.⁽⁴⁾

In view of these considerations we can well appreciate the reverence with which he speaks about Tradition. Not only had he been in living contact with the latter; he was himself a part of it. John, Polycarp and Irenaeus - these were to be for Christians in succeeding generations the names guaranteeing the unbroken continuity of the faith "once for all delivered unto the saints".⁽⁵⁾

- (1) Vide Eusebius, H.E., XIV. 6.7, where we find related the story of John's horror at meeting Cerinthus at the baths in Ephesus.
- (2) Irenaeus testifies to the fact that the Fourth Gospel was used extensively by the Gnostics, especially the Valentinians, to substantiate their cosmological speculations. (Haer., III:XI; 292-293(1); I:VIII; 35-36f.(1).)
- (3) The principal emphasis in all the Asian Fathers of the Church.
- (4) In the Quartodeciman dispute with Anicetus, Polycarp invokes the Johannine teaching and the Ephesian tradition. It was the same teaching and tradition Irenaeus was upholding when he, in his turn, protested against Victor's excommunication of the churches of Asia. The traditions of the East and West diverged here on a mere shift of emphasis. Orthodoxy for Rome was more a matter of ritual, whereas for Ephesus it was more a matter of belief.
- (5) Jude 3.

This legacy of tradition, the "deposit", was no doubt a personally precious thing bequeathed to Irenaeus by the Christian community at Smyrna and Ephesus. Fateful, too, for after ages was its direct transmission through him to the churches of the East and of the West. He was indebted, more or less, we may surmise, to Polycarp who is possibly "the Presbyter", the "superior one" referred to in the *Adversus Haereses*: but Polycarp is only one amongst the many influences (not wholly identifiable at this distance) that affected Irenaeus as he grew towards manhood and maturity of thought. The Asian Elders,⁽¹⁾ are regarded as the main source of his beliefs, but, apart from those who can be definitely named, must remain dubious and so of doubtful authority. We gather, however, that the Church's Rule of Truth which Irenaeus had succeeded to, so near its historic source was universally upheld. The church at Smyrna, therefore, had an important part to play in stamping this tradition on the mind of Irenaeus from his youth up through the direct personal example and the teaching of the martyr-bishop Polycarp⁽²⁾ who, in longevity, we are told, almost rivalled John himself, thus affording a continuous succession down to the time of his demise between the primitive Kerygma and the later preaching of the Church.

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- (1) Rainy has it that Irenaeus' dependence on the Asian Elders is noticeable from echoes in his writings of the thoughts of Ignatius, Polycarp and Melito, from the first of whom he derived the emphasis on the Lord's humanity. (*The Ancient Catholic Church*, pp. 180, 182.) Cf. Lietzmann, *The Founding of the Church Universal*, p. 214. Turner thinks that from a similar source Irenaeus got what Loofs has described as "an Asiatic speciality", namely, the special meaning of the Logos as the voice of God in revelation, the Word speaking out of the silence in Jesus, proclaiming the one God. Here Jesus' role is that of Teacher in the divine plan of redemption. Vide *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption*, p. 37.
- (2) "...a companion of the apostles...entrusted with the episcopate of the Church at Smyrna by the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Lord", (Eusebius, *H.E.*, III. 36. 1-2: Luke 1:2).

(C) Biographical Sketch

Materials for a life of Irenaeus are conspicuously scarce, considering the impact that his ideas made on the Church's thinking in his own day,⁽¹⁾ and continue to make in ours. That he was born sometime in the middle of the second century is all we can say with anything approaching certainty.

The circumstances of his early youth are equally beyond recovery. That he sat under Polycarp from his tender years has been adduced from certain reminiscences in the Epistle to Florinus,⁽²⁾ but we cannot conclude from this whether he was technically-speaking a pupil of the Presbyter,⁽³⁾ or merely stood in relation to him as to a revered father-in-God. The reminiscences referred to "as quoted by Eusebius from a lost letter" seem "more like the memories of a bright boy vividly recalling the scenes of his childhood than of a pupil of a theologian".⁽⁴⁾

It seems fairly probable that he was brought up in the nurture of a Christian home and in the fellowship of faith. His later progress indicates one early marked out, both by background and upbringing, as well as by natural aptitude for the offices he adorned. Even this much is conjectural, but seems conjecturally justified by what we can glean from surviving sources concerning his career.

- (1) His writings were originally more extensive than the documents that remain. Eusebius refers to "a most concise and exceedingly cogent work...against the Greeks, entitled On Science" (i.e. on Gnosis), and "a certain book of various discourses, in which he mentions the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Wisdom of Solomon...quoting certain passages from them". (H.E., V. 26.)
- (2) Vide Eusebius, H.E., V. 20. 6-7.
- (3) According to Irenaeus himself, a person taught by the mouth of another, is his "son", metaphorically speaking, and the teacher is his "father", but he nowhere indicates such a special relationship between himself and Polycarp. (Haer., IV:XLI; 51(ii).)
- (4) Library of Christian Classics, Vol. I (Early Christian Fathers), p. 347.

His academic training, it is almost certain, would pursue the usual lines followed by secular pedagogy in his day. For general educational purposes at this period, children of good Christian families underwent the customary Hellenistic discipline, so that a boy like Irenaeus in a city like Smyrna must have passed through the pagan schools.⁽¹⁾ He later on describes the language of his Gallic bishopric as "barbarous",⁽²⁾ which savours of the quite general Greek attitude to everything non-Greek. Apart from facility in writing (which is amply evident), his ability both to think and to express himself in Greek point in the same direction. In this, as in much else, his life lay in that world which had nurtured him and prepared him for his task,⁽³⁾ and such civilizing

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- (1) Contemporary higher education consisted of the intensive study of rhetoric, and the subjects read were poetry, drama, and prose literature, the principal "prescribed books" being Homer, Euripides, Menander, Demosthenes, etc. Passages were memorized, and instruction was given in simple composition and the elements of literary criticism. Rhetors or Sophists figured prominently, the latter being found in most of the cities of the Graeco-Roman world, though the leading centres, we are interested to learn, were Athens and Smyrna. (Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture*, pp. 10-12.) The pupils of the Sophist-schools were, in the educational scale, somewhere between the highly cultured and the masses (the so-called "idiotae") who were largely illiterate. (Laistner, *op.cit.*, p. 36.)
- (2) The Church was, at Lugdunum, as in every colony of the empire where it happened to exist, simply part of the Roman community, mostly speaking and thinking Greek.
- (3) Rainy says that, although his work lay in the West, he continued to write and think in Greek, and that his peculiarities are Asian rather than Western. (*The Ancient Catholic Church*, p. 180.)
- Irenaeus himself apologizes for not being practised in composition or eloquence, and warns us not to expect "any display of rhetoric, which I have never learned"..."or any beauty and persuasiveness of style" to which he makes no pretension. He writes, he tells us, simply, truthfully, and in his own homely way. (Haer., I:Pref; 3(1).) This resolution to have none of the florid artificiality of the prevailing literary mode does not, however, imply repudiation of the better part of the Hellenistic heritage. Laistner emphasizes that an artificial style of writing, tricked out with bizarre and fancy words, was much in evidence in the contemporary literary world (*op.cit.*, p. 13), but that the best of pagan writers also strongly criticized and at times openly condemned /

influences as existed in that world were closely wed to Hellenism.

No satisfactory reason has been given for his immigration into Gaul. It has been suggested that he sought refuge there from the persecution that broke out in Rome⁽¹⁾ about 164 A.D. Close contact was maintained between the Gallic churches and the Church in Asia.⁽²⁾ There is even a tradition that, to what (in Gaul) was virtually a mission-field of the Asian Church,⁽³⁾ Polycarp himself sent out the first missionary-pioneers.⁽⁴⁾ It is, at any rate, as Presbyter to Pothinus that we first find Irenaeus in this sphere, and the regard which the Christians in the land of his adoption came to entertain for him is proved by their choosing him to bear the letter of the imprisoned martyrs on the vexed question of Montanism to "pope" Eleutherus at Rome. Before he reached his destination persecution had descended on his brethren in the valley of the Rhone, Pothinus himself perishing in the

(3) continued from previous page:

condemned it in the interests of integrity and truth. (Op.cit., p. 50.) The art of composition embraced the grand, the middle, and the simple styles (op.cit., p. 12), so that a highly educated person could have written in the simple manner without discounting the skilled art of writing or turning his back on culture.

- (1) Where, it has been suggested, he studied under Justin Martyr busying himself with lecturing on heresiology. As to this, Irenaeus derives sufficient phrases and ideas from Justin to make it possible that he may have been his pupil as well as a reader of his books. Such a connection would not require Irenaeus to have lived at Rome, for Justin was not exactly a stranger to Asia; he had met Trypho at Ephesus for the famous dialogue, and he had been to Smyrna to visit Polycarp. Rome had, undoubtedly, become the refuge of every known shade of opinion, orthodox or otherwise, but Gnosticism was not by any means confined to the capital; it was rampant, too, in Gaul. Irenaeus refers to "our own district of the Rhône" where the heresies "have deluded many women". (Haer., I:XIII; 56(1).)
- (2):(3) We have proof of the close ties binding the two communities in the circular letter of the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, mentioned by Eusebius, H.E., V. 1. 2-3.
- (4) Vide Crutwell, i, p. 95.

onslaught on the Church. Irenaeus on his return⁽¹⁾ succeeded to the vacant bishopric, and is assumed to have continued in the latter for the remainder of his life. More than this we do not know. The manner, circumstances, and exact date of his death to this day remain veiled in obscurity.

(1) c. 177 A.D.

II. FORCES CONTENDING WITH THE CATHOLIC FAITH IN THE SECOND CENTURY⁽¹⁾

(A) The Roman State-Cultus

Rome's quarrel with Christianity was less religious than political, like the struggle between the Church and similar institutions based on totalitarian ideologies in the twentieth century. Observance of the legally prescribed procedures was, for Caesar, pretty much the same as paying one's taxes or fulfilling the obligations of national service in our day. So long as the regulations of the department for the due administration of the rites were formally observed and its requirements technically met, no questions needed to be asked. Religious toleration was as prevalent in the Roman world of Trajan or Aurelius as in our Western democracies. The forms and varieties of religious faith and practice were unlimited, and, with the advent of the Eastern emperors every cult under the sun came to be domiciled in Rome. So wide was this toleration that even atheism was allowed, provided one publicly recognized the "divinity" of the Caesars and bowed before the omnicompetence of the official bureaucracy. The Roman cultus was not, consequently, in conscious competition with the "gods many, and lords many"⁽²⁾ which abounded in the Empire and at Rome, nor were the latter in conscious competition with the prevailing Roman cult.

It was quite different, however, with the Christians who owned no

(1) For part of this section, and some of its most important points, the writer is indebted to Crutwell, Vol. i, pp. 257ff. Legge (Fore-runners and Rivals of Christianity, i, pp. lv-lviii) discounts the opposition value of Judaism, the Graeco-Roman pantheon, and Greek Philosophy. The real competitors, in his opinion, were: (1) the oriental religions, (2) strange sects grouped together by the Fathers of the Church under the generic name of Gnosticism and (3) the eclecticism of Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Christian beliefs known in connection with Manes.

(2) 1 Cor., VIII:5.

King but Christ, who loathed idolatry, refused to burn incense and were, it appeared, consumed with the desire to convert all men to their belief and way of life, who waited daily for the catastrophic overthrow of the kingdoms of this world,⁽¹⁾ and lived in constant expectation of the Second Coming, and the victorious fulfilment of their chiliastic dreams. One of the chief objections to the Christian faith from the Roman official point of view, it seems, was that, alongside the older, racial and national religions, it was unable to provide itself, as Crutwell says, with a certificate of birth. It is conceivable that Rome acted, as she did eventually, out of a deep awareness of her own inferiority. The cult of the emperors had some degree of popular appeal because of its universalism; but it never succeeded in providing the true principle of unity Rome sought through its means to realize, nor in meeting and satisfying, to any actual extent, the soul-hunger of the age.

(B) Popular Paganism

The foregoing references to Rome's religious policy will be sufficient to indicate the rank undergrowth of sects and superstitions hidden behind the façade of religious officialdom. Despite the calculated ridicule of the cynics and philosophers, polytheism was not dead. Since Plato's day it had continued to sustain popular bigotry,

(1) Laistner suggests opposition by the Roman senatorial class who revered the old traditions and sought to bolster up the latter by their active role in perpetuating Rome's cultural heritage. Their zeal for the old literature was a measure of their love of the pagan past which Christianity opposed and was determined to overthrow. For Romans of this type the Christian attitude was tantamount to barbarism as well as illiteracy, and to the Roman literateur it stood for something that deserved only to be despised. Celsus is representative of this literary elite. (Vide Laistner, Christianity and Pagan Culture, p. 6.)

This, of course, involved the Church in a quite serious dilemma. The only education so far available to the children of believers was of the prevailing pagan type, drawing its inspiration from the literary tradition which this die-hard class was so anxious to uphold.

ministering to the human heart's nostalgia for the now transfigured past, as well as its longing for a better world to come. Both of these objects of the common people's faith were bolstered up by the fables of mythology, the gods of the latter having in course of time been modernized by their identification with the daemones, supposed to hold sway over the various departments and activities of life, sharing men's carnal nature, and acting as intermediaries between the seen world and the realm of things unseen.

Not only had this popular religion lived on into the first age of Christianity, not unlike the resurgent East-Asian religions nowadays, it appeared to be experiencing a self-induced renewal of its youth.⁽¹⁾ This resurgence of pagan religious sentiment recoiled on cynics and critics alike. We learn, indeed, that the mere mention of atheism evoked in the popular mind a horror⁽²⁾ that attached itself all too readily to the Christians, already labelled "atheists" by both priests and government.

The educated man in such circumstances derived some satisfaction from the physical interpretation of mythology (much as the modern physicist may read his experiences and discoveries as a physicist into the general religious outlook of the age). For this type of mind the

(1) Julian is the figurehead of this organized renaissance in the religious life of Rome.

(2) The popular opposition to Christianity in the rural areas is understandable when we remember that health and prosperity in general were attributed to due regard for and regular observance of the ordinances of the old, time-honoured faith. Even in the more sophisticated atmosphere of the capital the same beliefs, it is conceivable, held sway. To refuse allegiance to the "gods", including the Emperor, was in a very real sense for the average Roman of the second century courting the displeasure of the unseen as well as the ruling powers, with possible disastrous consequences for the body politic. Vide Rainy, *The Ancient Catholic Church*, pp. 279-280.

Mysteries had a very great appeal, yielding a brand of transcendentalism which in the common people's hands became the crude astrology in which the cheaper type of newspaper deals indiscriminately these days. It was, thus, at the highest and the lowest levels, simultaneously that Gnosticism found a point of entry into the mind and outlook of the contemporary world.

(C) Greek Philosophy

One of the most hopeful signs during this period of something like an entente between Christianity and classical philosophy is, at first glance, the latter's opposition to paganism.⁽¹⁾ This common ground had been broadened as a consequence of the strongly religious character assumed by philosophy at this stage of its career. The Greek thinkers had in their own way, and following their own light (which certain of the Fathers we are dealing with would have agreed was light from heaven), arrived at some of the moral and spiritual insights claimed by the prophets of Israel.

How, then, did two such seemingly sympathetic systems come into conflict and eventually find themselves in overt hostility? The Christian exhibited, on his part, what to the urbane Hellenist must have seemed nothing less than crude intolerance. The Graeco-Roman world believed in tolerance, as we believe in "liberty", even the liberty of the Englishman, as someone says, to worship, without exercising the privilege. The intellectual tended to be offended by the "charismata" of the new religion and by the inability of the new religionists to rationalize their claims; but philosophic pride, the final downfall of

(1) cf. Tertullian, Ad. Nat., I:X; 443(i).

the intellectuals, on the other side, was the greatest obstacle of all. Were the achievements of the human intellect down through the centuries, as Crutwell expresses it, simply to capitulate to barbarian demands? Were the luminaries of the ancient world to sit at the feet of some third-class intellect? That could not easily be the Gospel for the Greeks whose endless quest was Wisdom, and to whom all this was just so much foolishness.⁽¹⁾ They were one day to give the glory that was Greece to the thing they had despised; but at this juncture the note of opposition makes itself clearly heard. In fact, philosophy, like the popular religion, was putting forth renewed endeavours to win its own place in the sun, and neo-Platonism in the classical tradition was to be its last defiant stand. In the end, of course it failed, both for the masses who desired salvation, and for the intelligentsia who would have saved others - on conditions - but whose pride was rooted in a Wisdom that could not even save themselves.

(D) Militant Judaism

The epithet 'militant' is selected purposely, for in the New Testament opposition by the Jews to Christianity is already evident. Much has been said and written as regards the sufferings they underwent, and have undergone at the hands of Christians; but this is offset (though

(1) The scandalon of Christianity for the Hellenic intellect was as much as anything its apparent irrationality. Celsus, for instance, in his 'True Word' cannot see why God should come down to earth at all, or send another down. Such a change in God is not only unnecessary but quite impossible. Again Porphyry of Tyre, a neo-Platonist who died in 304 A.D., in his 'Discourses Against the Christians' (in fifteen books) attempts to filter the pure teaching of Jesus, as he interprets it, out of the adulterated form which, according to him, the apostles gave it later on, presupposing a view something like that taken up by Harnack in our day. Vide W.D. Niven, *The Conflicts of the Early Church*, pp. 133, 135.

it never can be palliated or atoned for) by the suffering they imposed on early converts to Christianity as popular instigators of the mob-hysteria⁽¹⁾ that found its worst outlet in the murder and mutilation of those who followed the new faith. The Jews were in fact responsible for exposing the Church to the severity of the imperial decrees by emphasizing the distinction between Christianity and Judaism with which in Roman eyes the Gospel had from its first days been confused, if not identified. The Jew, of course, not only resented the grave charges which the Christian brought against him concerning the death of Christ; he bitterly opposed the inroads of the Christian mission into the Synagogue, and the aggressive competition which the former everywhere presented to the Jewish missionary enterprise.

Again, from the Church's side the Jew converted to the Gospel was a problem in himself. He held fast to the Law, and in so doing hung on to well nigh everything that formerly had made him what he was. This is the hard bone of contention between the Judaizers and St. Paul, between the Jerusalem Church party under James, and those who like Stephen saw afar off the World Mission of the Church, and, short of leave to live for it, were not unready to yield up their lives for so worthy an ideal.

The Fall of Jerusalem, in a sense, marks the watershed in this relationship between Jew and Christian. It was, as Rainy⁽²⁾ points out, difficult, after 70 A.D., for Jewish Christians, however loyal to the Law, to keep up effective contact with official Judaism, and

(1) Their prominence in this rôle, e.g. at the martyrdom of Polycarp, the populace (we read) shouting, "This fellow is the teacher of Asia, the Father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods." (Eusebius, H.E., IV. 15. 26-27.)

(2) The Ancient Catholic Church, pp. 18f.

subsequent to the rising under Bar Cochba, contact virtually ceased, since Christianity would not, and could not countenance the warrior-Messiah ideal for which the insurrection stood. Besides, Jewish Christians who entertained this attitude were anathematized as apostates by devout Jewry and even cursed in the synagogues. The drawing together of Jews of the Dispersion, already Hellenized, and Greeks converted independently to Christianity settled the question conclusively.

Alike with the Roman secularist, the pagan bigot, and the highbrow amongst the Greeks, the Jew was to make his effort to forestall, if not to stamp out the work and witness of the Faith.

(E) Gnosticism

Gnosticism has been described as a reaction along the lines of either Hebraism or Greek philosophy sometimes resulting in a fusion of the two,⁽¹⁾ in keeping with the syncretistic spirit of the age that brought it to full birth. The first fairly definite indications of the cult in the New Testament occur in the Epistles of St. Paul,⁽²⁾ with further notices in the Book of Acts,⁽³⁾ and the Johannine literature; but these are little more than the first, faint murmurings of the storm whose main force struck the Christian Church about 130 A.D.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Religion in Hellenism is equated with reason or intellectual speculation, whence Gnosticism gets its name. In substance it is, according to W.D. Niven (The Conflicts of the Early Church, pp. 153-154) "primarily Eastern dualism combined with the Greek form", i.e., on the one hand, the Eastern dualism of light and darkness, and, on the other, the Greek dualism of phenomena (signifying sense appearances) and noumena (representing true being). The final contrast is between the Gnostic Pleroma, the world of Goodness and of Light, and the Kenoma, the world of Evil and of Darkness.

(2) i Tim., I:20; ii Tim., II:17:Col. II.

(3) Acts, XX:29-30, quoted by Irenaeus (Haer., III:XIV; 318(i)).

(4) The Ancient Catholic Church, p. 95.

Just prior to the birth of Irenaeus, it appears, the movement was flourishing in Roman Asia. Ignatius, delivering his last charge to the Asian churches on his way to martyrdom at Rome,⁽¹⁾ lays on Polycarp the care of the church at Antioch, and adjures the Smyrnaeans to avoid docetic Gnosticism. Irenaeus' own comments are sufficient indication of the phenomenally fast diffusion⁽²⁾ and the prolific character of the movement..."like mushrooms" growing from the ground⁽³⁾..."the many-headed" hydra sprung from the Valentinian school.⁽⁴⁾ Occultism, spiritualism, magic and theurgy are all mixed into it. This is but one of the special manifestations of a more general phenomenon, labelled "mystical naturalism" which appears and reappears in one form or another throughout the course of history, and which rests on the belief that behind the panorama of the visible world lies the secret of the cosmos, the boundless cause of all. In its more religious moments it sees the inner mystery as the Absolute, the Alone, the Wholly Other, the Supreme God who is high above all worlds, and whose relation to the mundane sphere is represented by a downgraded sequence of emanations which at

(1) Eusebius, H.E., III. 36. 1-10.

(2) Simon Magus mentioned in Acts VIII:9f. is designated by Irenaeus as the father of heresies. (Haer., I:XXIII; 87(1).) Simon's chief literary effort was "The Great Annunciation (or Denial)", a cosmological, quasi-mystical hotch-potch of Old Testament and Gnostic ingredients; (Vide Crutwell, op.cit., i, p. 194); but he cannot rightly be regarded as the originator of such a populous and far-flung community of ideas and beliefs.

Gnosticism is just another facet of the total situation within which the early Church found herself, with the progressive narrowing and accompanying intensification of the underlying struggle: (1) in the arena, literally, with the civil power of Rome, (2) in the field of pagan thought, the latter employing subtler, but far more deadly instruments and (3) within the Church's own internal life in the conflict with heresy.

(3) Haer., I:XXIX; 101(1).

(4) Haer., I:XXX; 112(1).

its lowest is the merely physical, the embodiment of evil,⁽¹⁾ over against the pure serenity of the One and the Alone. Deliverance⁽²⁾ is, therefore, realized by the soul's flight on the wings of asceticism and ecstasy, from the Many to the One, from the temporal to the Eternal, through all the intermediate realms of psychical existence to the spiritual world "afar beyond the stars".⁽³⁾ This emphasis was strong in the religion of Asia, an obvious derivation from the orientalism to which on every side it was openly exposed.

From the earlier to the later phases of the movement a transition⁽⁴⁾ is effected in connection with a new demand arising out of the spiritual experience and, chiefly, the spiritual poverty of the age. Philo had sought to meet the situation by creating a Jewish Gnosis which was simply an effort to explain the cosmos and served its purpose well

- (1) The Gnostic thus invented the dilemma in which he finally found himself. The Absolute, however attenuated the connections, is the source of the world's evil (if it be evil), after all.
- (2) In point of fact, we get the opposite result. The Gnostic world-view resolves itself into "an incessant process of evolution with neither beginning nor end", like the wheel of Karma, "a crushing pantheism", revealing a vast emptiness instead of the living God, reminiscent of the self-annihilation of the religions of the East.
- (3) The other-worldliness of Gnosticism involved a flight not only from the immediate mundane sphere, but from history itself. The latter develops into a charade on a grand scale, a department of mythology (and what mythology!), intended to symbolize or allegorize the tangible and visible phenomena of the world.
- (4) The transition had already been anticipated for Christianity from the side of the Apologists. The apostles had recognized a legitimate type of gnosis. (cf. ii Peter, 1:5.) This is implied in the "so-called" by which in their eyes the false gnosis is stigmatized. The legitimate gnosis stood for a more profound apprehension of the Truth imparted to simple faith. The second stage in further development is reached with the Epistle of Barnabas where gnosis signifies the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, and the development is complete when the text of Scripture begins to be tampered with. Speculation at this point runs riot and religion passes over in the end into Theosophy.

enough, so long as that seemed to be all that was required; but by the second century this sort of explanation was no longer adequate. The craving for redemption became almost universal, and the Gnostics to satisfy this drew on Christianity, as they had drawn formerly on orientalism and Greek philosophy. The borrowed elements passed immediately through the Gnostic alchemy, the content of Christianity being in the process completely allegorized.⁽¹⁾ The Jesus of history is supplanted by the discarnate Christ of decetic mysticism. Sin becomes ignorance, and salvation (a thing exclusively of the soul)⁽²⁾ becomes knowledge of the upward way that leads from darkness into light, the secret pass-word for the soul's journey through the heavenly places, past the greatly-dreaded principalities and powers. This type of Gnosis by and large is man-derived and whatever its pretensions, is a form of atheism. Moral responsibility and freedom are replaced by a doctrine of predestination, born of fatalism.

The grosser forms of Gnosticism must not however blind us to the higher ideals it pursued and seriously endeavoured to inspire.⁽³⁾ The Gnostic from this viewpoint did not stand for knowledge instead of faith. He claimed to have a fuller and a better revelation than that which satisfied the acquiescent majority.⁽⁴⁾ As Hatch has pointed out, the

- (1) This follows from the deification of Nature, a by-product of Pantheism, finding expression in astrology and numerology, number in Pythagoreanism being the first principle of things. The Gospel thus interpreted became in the hands of the Gnostics a mainly physical concern, like Hesiod's Theogony. X
- (2) Both faith and works took second place to gnosis in the systems of the heretics.
- (3) Vide W.D. Niven, The Conflicts of the Early Church, p. 153.
- (4) It was as a religion that it held out its gnosis of salvation to mankind and it was this side to its confusingly many-sided character that constituted its chief claim to be a rival, and a rival of no mean calibre, to Christianity.

Gnostic's reiterated claim to higher knowledge was a voice from within the inner circle of the Church protesting against the lowered standards the latter tended to accept. This type of Gnostic had a keener sense of the redemption wrought by Christ than many of his orthodox contemporaries, it would seem. Redemption he believed to be available to faith, understood as a form of thought, a man's true realization of his relatedness to Christ, and, consequently of his high spiritual destiny. In stressing the 'agnitio' that made this possible, he may have been simply emphasizing that the gift of God in Christ is not without an increasingly intellectual reaction on our part. His protest may, conceivably, have been entered in the interest of true faith, when many merely surface converts were finding their way into the Church, with only the vaguest, if any, ideas as to the difference between the new religion and the old allegiances. Transplantation of the old stock into the new soil must have been fairly prevalent, rather than St. Paul's ideal of ingrafting into Christ.⁽¹⁾ Could there possibly have been an admissible gnostic succession growing out of primitive Christianity, and is it conceivable that the "first-generation" gnostics, if we may so describe them, lost their battle to a second line of "Gnosticizers" who became responsible for the imported elements to the detriment of the Faith committed to the saints?

At the same time, the popular appeal mechanism of Gnosticism must not be minimized.⁽²⁾ It offered the half-scared, half-religious type

(1) Romans XI:16-24.

(2) The popular response to gnostic ideologizing would be largely emotional. "Injustice and corruption in public life, grinding taxation, the extremes of wealth and poverty, so that for the mass of the people the conditions in which they lived and worked from day to day were at best uncertain, at worst engendered in all but hopeless /

of individual what appears then, as now, to have been in great demand, escape from immediate reality and a solid guarantee of security for the future⁽¹⁾ in a sense not exclusively spiritual. Its gains were considerable in its day. Not without feeling Irenaeus speaks of those who "by means of their craftily ~~constructed~~^{insinuated} plausibilities draw away the minds of the inexperienced to take them captive"...overthrowing the faith of many and, "under a pretence of superior knowledge drawing them away from Him who founded and adorned the universe."⁽²⁾ How he met and turned back the challenge we shall discover in due course. How vitally important was his doing so can be appreciated only when we recall, and in so doing realize that had Christianity not won free of this parasitic growth, it would have lost what constituted its essential character and its vital principle'.

(2) continued from previous page:

hopeless despair - these were the material hardships that turned men to beliefs and cults which offered hope of an after life and of rewards and compensation for earthly suffering." (Laistner, p. 4.) It was to such a "better land" mentality that the religious romanticism of Valentinus, no doubt, made its nostalgic appeal.

(1) Simon Magus is reputed to have promised through the baptism which he offered security in life and immunity from death. When in the upward journey the companions of the Demiurge are reached, the enlightened soul need only say, "I am a son from the Father - the Father who had a pre-existence, and a son in Him who is pre-existent ...I know myself," and death and hell at the announcement flee away. (Haer., I:XXI; 83-84(1).)

(2) Haer., I:Pref. (1).

III. QUESTIONS RAISED BY GNOSTICISM: THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

(A) The Many or the Few?

In the *Adversus Haereses*, Book I, Irenaeus draws attention to the boast the Gnostics made of being in possession of a secret tradition, revealed mystically in parables by Christ. Paul, it appears, was claimed by them wherever he could be interpreted to conform with their ideas,⁽¹⁾ and Matthew, XI:25-27, was construed as signifying that the Creator of the world had always been known universally, but that here the Lord is speaking of the unknown Father whom the Gnostics had the honour for the first time to proclaim.⁽²⁾

Behind this assertion lay the peculiar Gnostic anthropology, according to which man consists of the following four, elemental parts: (a) an animal soul, derived from the Demiurge, (b) a body originating from the earth, (c) the fleshly ingredient, produced out of matter and (d) the spiritual part, born of Achamoth. There are, in practice, so the Gnostics made out, three different kinds of men, spiritual, material and animal, represented in the Scriptures by Cain, Abel and Seth.⁽³⁾ The good are those capable of receiving into themselves a

(1) Haer., I:III; 12(i); the Pauline text quoted as example is Eph. III:21 which the Gnostics read conveniently, "to all the generations of the Aeons of the Aeon".

(2) Haer., I:XX; 80(i); the real Gnostic intention here may have escaped some Christians. Gnosticism taught that common ignorance was blind to God as He really is. *αγνωστος θεος* would not mean for them that God is an unknown quantity per se - the position of the agnostic - but that He might as well have no existence for all the ordinary run of men and women know of His true being. The light of the knowledge of God vouchsafed to the "knowing ones" is, so to speak, the Gospel in the Gospels. God is agnostos because of the loss of this true knowledge by those who claim to live and move in Him. (Vide *The Jung Codex*, pp. 105-106.)

(3) Haer., I:VII; 31(i).

seed of the divine, thus making them elect.⁽¹⁾ The bad are those who, by nature, are eternally incapable of so receiving it.⁽²⁾ The ordinary Church people (the "vulgar" or "ecclesiastic")⁽³⁾ are the vast majority having no entry either for sin or for salvation into the fellowship of the few.

This complicated ideology led to some interesting and not a few troublesome corollaries in its time. In virtue, for example, of his inherent spirituality, the Gnostic, morals quite apart,⁽⁴⁾ would undoubtedly be saved. For him all things were lawful seeing that every aspect of experience was essential, as he believed, to fullest self expression and fulfilment, both in this life and the next. He who would know all things, runs the argument, must experience all things!⁽⁵⁾ Hence, sinning is no longer sin but plain necessity. Right and Wrong are reduced thus to the level of pragmatic subjectivism, and conscience has no claims. According to decetic Gnosticism Jesus was a mere man, Joseph's son, any difference in him as compared with other men

- (1) Haer., I:VI; 27(1). The distinctions were applied more generally to mankind as a whole. The Hylie were the heathen, the Psychic were the Jews, and the Spiritual were the Christians, the inner distinctions being worked out for the latter on precisely the same principle. Those who were chiefly got at by this elitist Christianity were the same people who read the Apologists and studied the tracts of the Gnostic scribblers, a middle class, proud of its education, but, as Rainy puts it, rather maladroit (op.cit., p. 207).
- (2) Haer., I:VII; 31(1).
- (3) Haer., III:XV; 321(1). These are they who possess faith, and are established in good works, but have not true enlightenment. (Haer., I:VI; 25(1).) Irenaeus satirizes the conceited Gnostic just as cleverly as Shakespeare satirized Malvolio. He "walks with a strutting gait and a supercilious countenance possessing all the pompous air of a cock", to which is added a noticeable "gravity of countenance". (Haer., III:XV; 322(1).)
- (4) Haer., I:VI; 26(1).
- (5) Haer., II:XXXII; 242(1). This is, according to Carpocrates, one reason for believing in the transmigration of souls which offers an unlimited range and variety of experience, while delivering the soul from the limitations of the one fleshly imprisonment. (Haer., I:XXV; 95(1).)

consisting only in having kept his soul steadfast and pure, and perfectly remembering "those things which he had seen within the sphere of the unbegotten God".⁽¹⁾ In short, he was just a Gnostic of a somewhat more exalted type. It seems that the Gnostics refused to be regarded as either Christians or Jews, and taught that the consummation of all things would come about when the spiritual attained ultimately to the perfect knowledge of God and were initiated into the final mysteries of their soul-mother, Achamoth.⁽²⁾

(B) History or Myth?

"In considering," says a modern author, "the beliefs of any race or tribe it is found that there are two groups of ideas, the one pertaining to the soul and corresponding to what we should call religious doctrines, the other mainly the product of the imagination. Religion and mythology," he comments, "are two separate affairs, but, especially with the lower races, they are so much intermixed and blended that it is impossible to discriminate between them."⁽³⁾ To think of Gnosticism as a species of intoxicated intellectualism⁽⁴⁾ and nothing more is to err greatly from the truth. Undoubtedly in the upper circles of the

(1) Haer., I:XXV; 93(i). Jesus is simply the last Aeon, the pre-eminent revealer, sent to lead men into the knowledge of the truth that makes them free.

(2) Haer., I:VI; 25(i).

(3) J.A. Macculloch, "Religion; Its Origin and Forms", p. 87.

(4) This is not, however, wholly alien to Gnosticism. What was the essence of Gnosis for the Gnostic? A recent writer thinks it to have been mainly "a psychological experience lived or imagined by him", and meaning for him "the Advent to Knowledge, and, in a word, to Salvation". (Puech, Jung Codex, p. 29f.)

This however does not exonerate even the higher intellects among the Gnostics from the charge of unreality. A "psychological experience, lived or imagined" by anyone may result in anything from solipsism to sheer hallucination. The emphasizing of ideas or theories at the expense of historical events was and remains the fundamental heresy in all the Gnostic heresies.



movement, while it was yet within the Church, were men like Valentinus who were, apart from being Gnostics altogether, the thinking Christians of their day. When we look however at the system through the eyes of Irenaeus we are made aware of something very different indeed. Gnostic cosmology is vivid evidence of the Gnostic's sheer indifference to any distinction ordinarily recognized between the worlds of fiction and of fact.

No gospel of redemption can dispense, it has been said, with some sort of cosmology, and second century Gnosticism took the fullest possible cognizance of this important principle. The power it commanded in its heyday was its professed ability to explain the mystery of creation, to lay bare the secrets of the cosmos and to secure the cosmic destiny of the individual soul. This may evoke derision in a more sophisticated age, but the perennial preoccupation of the unsophisticated mind (and of minds not so unsophisticated) is not to be despised. The Church itself must always have a clearly defined place in its teaching both for a sound cosmology and a balanced eschatology.

Knowledge of the unspeakable Greatness constituted for the Gnostics perfect redemption in itself.⁽¹⁾ They even proclaimed that to know their doctrine was equivalent to the resurrection of the dead.⁽²⁾ Nor is this all. Whoever knows these things is capable of becoming both incomprehensible and invisible to the Angels and the powers. Possessed of the Gnostic "Open Sesame", he passes through them with impunity, both unseen and unknown.⁽³⁾

(1) cf. Haer., I:XXI; 83(i). This applied even at the very moment of death when a sort of last unction, with oil and water as the media, secured the destiny of the departing soul.

(2) Haer., II:XXXI; 241(i).

(3) Haer., I:XXIV; 92(i).

Reality is reduced ultimately to a bizarre impressionism⁽¹⁾ communicable in code, not unlike the mathematical symbolism of many modern scientists who, despite their "modernist" ideas and incomparably greater knowledge, are really quite old-fashioned Gnostics without being aware of it.

The course thus embarked on is as endless as the tendency is timeless. It proceeds as vigorously today as ever it did in Southern Gaul, or Rome, or Asia. The human mind for all its admirable faculties has the unique faculty of re-creating εἰδωλα which only in a secondary sense means gods "of wood and stone". These denizens of the densely populated world of popular mythology resulted largely from the Gnostic's explaining away everything within the sphere of revelation by means of allegory,⁽²⁾ the Fall being re-edited, for example, as the myth of Achamoth. The difference between Christianity, as we have come to think of it, and Christianity as the Gnostic represented it, is well brought out in the Jung Codex where the editor commenting on the Gospel of Truth says: "...however many are the points at which the familiar Gospels of the New Testament differ from each other, they all agree in

- (1) His final judgment on the Gnostics where all such matters are concerned is that "they do not believe in that which really exists, and have fallen away into the belief of that which, in fact, has no existence". (Haer., II:X; 145(i).)
- (2) A similar experiment is in progress, in our day. Bultmann disregards the objective, historical aspect of the Lord's life and death and resurrection in the interests of his own demythologizing method. Theological rather than historical truth is, according to this approach, the real content of essential Christianity. Whether the Cross or the Resurrection are, for example, true is merely a matter of subjectivity. Bultmann's demythologizing of Christianity is really the recreation of myth out of history. Irenaeus strenuously opposes this allegorizing tendency in his day (e.g. Haer., V:XXXV; 154-155(ii)), but he condones it, too, in spite of condemning and, on occasion, uses it. Vide Haer., II:XXII; 196-197(i), IV:XXXI; 1(i), etc.

attempting to give historical accounts about Jesus Christ, to describe His life in a definite development which proceeds from His Baptism by John down to His Crucifixion and Resurrection, and in presenting the words and deeds of Jesus in a sometimes very loose sequence but with very concrete data. Of such a plan nothing at all is to be found in The Gospel of Truth. Here no narratives are given, the Crucifixion is announced already at the outset ... , while particular facts are not to be found...Here we are given no 'Logia Iesou' nor do we find the life and works of Jesus set in their connection with the Old Testament revelation as is the case in the New Testament,"(1)

John's Gospel was given to the world as a final refutation of all conceptions of this type.(2)

(C) Logos or Christ?

The Prologue to John's Gospel has in course of time gathered round it a fair share of controversy. One thing, however, can be said concerning it, quite non-controversially. It sounds like the rallying-cry of the early Church against those who sought to sever the Christian dispensation from its roots in reality. There is a spacious area of Gnostic speculation given over to this end. Marcion's rabid anti-Judaism which, tempered with discretion, might have proved of some service to the Faith drove a broad wedge between the Old Testament and the New. As has been pertinently observed, it is not the divinity but the humanity of Jesus that the Gnostic schools denied. Rather than recognize that the Word could become flesh, the Docetists took the greatest pains to demonstrate that the fleshly form in which the Word

(1) Jung Codex, p. 95.

(2) cf. Haer., III:I; 259(i), III:XI; 287-288(i).

was manifest did not actually exist. Thrice in the opening sentences of the Prologue to his Gospel, John makes use of the term Λόγος and with each repetition he affirms something that the heretics were ever seeking to deny.⁽¹⁾ "In the beginning was the Word"...the role of the Λόγος at the creation of the world; "and the Word was with God"... the co-existence of the Λόγος with the Creator; "and the Word was God"... the likeness of the Λόγος to the eternal God Himself. So marked is this emphasis on certain vital issues menacingly raised by Gnosticism that the Fourth Gospel has been suspected of Gnosticizing tendencies. The Gnostics taught, in effect, that the Saviour who became flesh was not the Word, but subsequent to the latter, and that there were really several Christs! There was the Christ whom Monogenes produced for the "confirmation of the Pleroma"; another Christ, the Saviour was sent forth for the glorification of the Father; and a third, the "dispensational" Christ came to bear suffering, hiding the true Christ within himself.⁽²⁾ At the Baptism by the river Jordan this "dispensational" agent in the person of Jesus received the Christ of the Pleroma descending on him like a dove, and passed at birth, through his mother

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- (1) Irenaeus inveighs against Gnostic mythologizing of John's Gospel. The heretics preach an "unknown God" and read their ideology into everything John says concerning Christ...as "only-begotten Word", "the Truth", "the Life", etc. The latter they derive from the primary Ogdoad, their origin for everything. But he is fully conscious of the grave dangers here involved, for if Christ be the son of the Ogdoad, the Jesus whom John invokes has no claim to authority or truth. (Haer., I:VIII; 36f.(i).)
- (2) In view of the Gnostic attitude to matter, the Incarnation was regarded as impossible. The Messiah is singled out by the Demiurge, and on to this Messianic figure the Saviour descends at the appointed time, making him the instrument of the divine plan of salvation. Jesus Christ simply represents the union of one of the many Aeons, bearing the name of Christ with the man men knew as Jesus. Vide Haer., III:XVI; 323f.(i), and for the orthodox rebuttal of this theory, Haer., III:XVIII; 237f.(i).

Mary, like water through a pipe.⁽¹⁾ The baptism instituted by Jesus was for the remission of sins alone, whereas the redemption inaugurated by the Christ who descended on him was for the perfection of the spiritual among men.⁽²⁾ When, again, Jesus was brought before Pilate's judgment-seat, the spirit of Christ was taken away from him, because even the seed which the latter had inherited from the mother, Achamoth, was incapable of suffering,⁽³⁾ and finally, at the Crucifixion, Simon took Jesus' place. Those who know this "have been freed from the principalities that formed the world" as Basilides gave out. Not only does this invalidate belief in the Crucified. The man who makes profession of the latter is regarded as a slave.⁽⁴⁾ To the post-resurrection appearances the same argument applies. These were effected in the spiritual body; for, the man, Jesus being dead, it was the (Gnostic) Christ who, it was held, remained alive.⁽⁵⁾ This is, as we can see, the central issue with the Fourth Evangelist. It was at a deeper level, the issue between monotheism⁽⁶⁾ and polytheism confronting the whole Church. For Gnosticism, the Christs of one brand or another were mere emanations from the so-called Ogdoad, beyond the sphere of time and change. One cannot in fact but feel that all the intermediaries of this nature were but thinly-disguised versions of the gods of heathendom, or, at least, a liberal concession to polytheistic modes of thought. Indirectly, in the end, however, this partly served the Church's cause, the later Trinitarian formula being the Church's final

(1) Haer., III:XI; 289(1).

(2) Haer., I:XXI; 81(1).

(3) Haer., I:VII; 29(1).

(4) Haer., I:XXIV; 92(1).

(5) Haer., I:XXX; 3(1).

(6) cf. Haer., IV:I; 378(1).

rejoinder to the Gnostic tendency⁽¹⁾ to treat the three aspects of the Godhead as simply three aeons or emanations of the one Superior God.

(1) cf. Niven, *The Conflicts of the Early Church*, pp. 163, 167.

IV. IRENÆUS ADVERSUS HAERESES: THE ORTHODOX REPLY

(A) The Testimony of Tradition

Irenaeus' whole rebuttal of the Gnostic thesis is well illustrated by his treatment of the question of Tradition,⁽¹⁾ described as "the only true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons",⁽²⁾ and of which the three chief pillars are: (A) The Authoritative Scriptures,⁽³⁾ (B) The Sayings of the Lord which go furthest back to Peter and Paul at Rome,⁽⁴⁾ and (C) The Apostolic Teaching.⁽⁵⁾ This Tradition is perpetuated in the succession of Elders, Presbyters⁽⁶⁾ and Bishops,⁽⁷⁾ and the main strength of its claim is the *communio fidei* extending everywhere, and universally observed.⁽⁸⁾

The plan of salvation has been transmitted in public proclamation, by the Kerygma,⁽⁹⁾ and through the medium of Scripture. Those who

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- (1) The Gnostics, in Hatch's view, were prepared to accept all but a traditionally authoritative interpretation of the Christian teaching (op.cit., p. 325). The Church's object in insisting upon this was the condemnation of private interpretation.
 - (2) Haer., III:Pref; 258(i).
 - (3) Haer., II:XXX; 235(i).
 - (4) Haer., III:III; 261(i).
 - (5) Described elsewhere as "the utterances of the prophets, of the Lord, and of the apostles". (Haer., II:II; 123(i).)
 - (6) It is in the presence of the Presbyters with whom is the apostolic doctrine that the Scriptures are to be read in Church. (Haer., IV:XXXII; 5(ii).) This was, in part, to counteract the Gnostics' fabrication of apocryphal writings, and the practice of using the Scriptures to suit themselves. (Haer., I:III; 15(i) and cf. I:VIII; 32(i); III:XI; 296(i).)
 - (7) "To whom the apostles committed the churches" prior to the Gnostics. (Haer., V:XX; 108(ii).)
 - (8) Haer., III:III; 260(i), V:XX; 109(ii).
 - (9) Which was primary just so long as the majority of catechumens and believers were illiterate, but had to be given literary expression when a new book-reading, culture-loving class sought admission to the Church. The Gnostic claim to a viva voce tradition greatly hastened this development.

transmitted the message could not have preached, however, prior to possessing "perfect knowledge", that truest gnosis, claimed by some presuming to improve on the apostles.

The Gnostics, when refuted from the Scriptures, will retort by asserting that the latter cannot be interpreted aright by those ignorant of the true, that is to say, their own tradition, the truth having been handed down not in writing but viva voce to the inner circle, the elect.⁽¹⁾ But, answers Irenaeus, the apostles did not teach "one set of doctrines in private and another in public".⁽²⁾ The so-called secret revelation is no more than a pretence, a studied effort to convey the (false) impression that the Gnostics have something to reveal over and above the divinely-given revelation, a form of error decked out attractively so as to appeal more than the truth, but for all its contrivance of as much effectiveness as weaving "ropes of sand".⁽³⁾ All Scripture given by God, Irenaeus says, is perfectly consistent; "and through the many diversified utterances ... there shall be heard one harmonious melody in us, praising in hymns that God who created all things",⁽⁴⁾ and "the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it".⁽⁵⁾ The regula veritatis, then, is everywhere exercised, and furthermore the fact that the fathers of heresy differ so much amongst themselves provides an a priori proof of

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- (1) Haer., III:II; 259(i). When thrown back on apostolic origins the Gnostics defend themselves by saying that the Apostles mixed the Gospel and the Law, confusing the good God with the Jewish Demiurge. The Lord, they could even say, sometimes did the same himself. (cf. Haer., III:II; 260(i).)
- (2) Haer., III:VX; 321(i).
- (3) Haer., I:VIII; 31(i); II:X; 144(i).
- (4) Haer., II:XXVIII; 222(i), text uncertain.
- (5) Haer., I:X; 43(i).

the immovability of the truth the Church proclaims.⁽¹⁾ The latter has been entrusted with the light of God, and by God's wisdom she exists to save all men.⁽²⁾ If life in God is conditioned by the natural (hereditary) constitution of the soul, faith has no meaning because, naturaliter, the soul's destiny is already foreordained. There was no meaning, either, in Christ becoming man to be the Saviour of all men. Righteousness is rendered impotent since it cannot touch the lost, and so itself becomes unrighteousness as being consequently unjust; on this showing also a judgment is ruled out.⁽³⁾ It was not for those merely who believed on Him in the time of Tiberius Caesar that Christ came, nor did the Father exercise his providence for the men only who are now alive, but, sums up Irenaeus, "for all men altogether, who from the beginning, according to their capacity, in their generation have both feared and loved God, and practised justice and piety towards their neighbours, and have earnestly desired to see Christ, and hear His voice".⁽⁴⁾ The Church preaches the truth everywhere. She is "the seven-branched candlestick" which bears the light of Christ.

(B) The Authority of Reason

Irenaeus' resounding summons, in a world of thought and everyday experience apparently gone mad, is to the arbitrament of reason. His chief complaint against the Gnostics is that, in their bizarre mythologizing they have utterly departed (circumeuntes) from this basic

(1) Haer., I:K; 42(1).

(2) Haer., V:XX; 109(ii).

(3) Haer., II:XXIX; 229(i).

(4) Haer., IV:XXII; 454-455(i). Someone has said that Gnosticism was an easy way of evading the demands of an enlightened social service!

principle.⁽¹⁾ Sound thinking, he would insist, also contributes to salvation.⁽²⁾ There are two chief areas for the exercise of man's intellectual activity: (a) the objects of sense-perception and (b) the things set out clearly and unambiguously in the Scriptures,⁽³⁾ for which the rule is the truth itself. These are enough and plain enough for anyone to make a beginning with, not in a vain but in a rational way. Thus certain of the Gentiles, less voluptuous and less given to idolatry, were convinced however slightly moved in this direction that the Maker of the universe, who exercises a providence over all things and arranges our world's affairs,⁽⁴⁾ should be designated Father. "Wherefore, although no-one knows the Father, except the Son, nor the Son except the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him,⁽⁵⁾" yet all do know this one fact, at least, because reason, implanted in their minds, moves them, and reveals to them the truth that there is one God, the Lord of all..."⁽⁶⁾ Even those who speak against God thereby acknowledge Him by calling Him Creator, all men witnessing to this truth, that God is, and that He is the Father. The ancients preserved this persuasion as a legacy from the first-created man. Others learned it after them from the prophets, and the heathen from creation. This is the Tradition received also from the apostles by the Church in all the world.⁽⁷⁾

Here, and elsewhere, in his appeal to the consensus of belief, Irenaeus lays stress upon the fundamental reasonableness of things.

- (1) Haer., II:XVII; 177(1).
- (2) Haer., II:XXVII; 217(1).
- (3) Op.cit., loc.cit.
- (4) Haer., III:XXV; 371(1).
- (5) Matt. XI:27.
- (6) Haer., II:VI; 133(1).
- (7) Haer., II:IX; 142-143(1).

There is in the collective experience of all men an inherent rationality and, in such matters, we can place reliance on our sanctified common-sense and on our sensible faculties. Where man's belief, the load-stone of his soul's eternal destiny depends on the things he witnesses with his eyes and can ponder in his thoughts, the great soul of the world on its side can be relied on to be just. God is supreme Reason in one aspect of His being; surely, then, He who is Reason has made all things reasonable.⁽¹⁾ Those who live contrary to reason live, in effect, opposed to God and all this is clearly demonstrated in the incarnation and the resurrection of the Lord Who came in reality⁽²⁾ "not despising or evading any condition of humanity", nor setting aside in Himself that law⁽³⁾ which He had appointed for the human race. The Word redeemed us "by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason",⁽⁴⁾ redeeming, in fact, His own property thereby. He even "observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead".⁽⁵⁾

God is not arbitrary in His actions nor above the laws which He has made for man's creation and the constitution of the world. All things observe the rule of law and they must serve it also who lay claim to being the spiritually and intellectually élite amongst their fellow-men. Any irrational construction put on a rationally conceived and rationally constituted universe cannot escape the charge of unreality in the end.

(1) cf. Haer., V:I; 58(ii).

(2) The original belief, suggests Hatch, was in certain historical facts; the developed belief came to be assent to a set of deductions from metaphysical speculation (pp. 327-328). Irenaeus' own intention is, however, the demythologizing of the mythological Gospel produced by Gnosticism.

(3) Haer., II:XXI; 199(i).

(4) Haer., V:I; 56(ii).

(5) Haer., V:XXXI; 140(ii).

It winds up in its denial of the God who made all things, with the denial of itself.

(C) The Witness of the Word

To Gnosticism's unwarranted encroachment on the Christian dispensation as transmitted by Tradition, Irenaeus replies in recognizable Johannine idiom⁽¹⁾ with a reference to "the Word, who existed in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, who was also always present with mankind",⁽²⁾ who is, in fact, "our Lord Jesus Christ,⁽³⁾ by whom all things were made, who communicates with invisible beings after the manner of the intellect" and who..."was made flesh, and hung upon the tree, that He might sum up all things in Himself."⁽⁴⁾ This is the thought of God Who comprehends all things, Who is Himself all mind, all reason, all active spirit, all light, and always exists one and the same,⁽⁵⁾ Who being "all mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly

(1) In making Jesus Christ the starting-point Irenaeus, remarks Harnack, (quoting Zahn) follows John and Ignatius. He is almost always thinking of Jesus when he speaks of the Logos or of the Son of God (Dogmen., ii, p. 262). This is a telling point against Harnack's own position!

(2) Haer., III:XVIII; 337(i).

(3) Haer., III:VIII; 276(i).

(4) Haer., V:XVIII; 106(ii). Vide the Epideixis, par. 34..."because He is Himself the Word of God Almighty, Who in His invisible form pervades us universally in the whole world, and encompasses both its length and breadth and height and depth - for by God's Word everything is disposed and administered - the Son of God was also crucified in these, imprinted in the form of a cross on the universe". It is, comments Harnack, "one and the same Jesus Christ, not a Jesus and a Christ, not a mere temporary union of an aeon and a man, but one and the same person, who created the world, was born, suffered, and ascended". (Dogmen., ii, p. 276.) cf. op.cit., p. 263 where Harnack says that the Redeemer is involved in both Creation and Redemption; and again at p. 284, that this is the new Adam, who possesses the Logos, rather than the Logos, who has become the new Adam. For Irenaeus the argument is clinched by saying that, if the Lord had come from some other than the heavenly Father, he would not have recapitulated the ancient and primary enmity against the Serpent in himself.

(5) Haer., II:XXVIII; 223(i).

what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks".⁽¹⁾ He is the Word, "through whom the wood fructifies, and the fountains gush forth, and the earth gives, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear".⁽²⁾ "The Son, co-eternal with the Father was present in the beginning with His own handiwork,⁽³⁾ the Incarnation being the union of the Word with the work of His own hands."⁽⁴⁾ Though the Word was not received by His own people, to whom He came, still He came to His own things⁽⁵⁾ (the words of John, I:10,11, literally rendered). The Son talks with the pre-Mosaic patriarchs, and rebukes the Sodomites for their wickedness.⁽⁶⁾

Now, on no account, can this historical continuity be denied. The wine which was made by God at creation, Irenaeus argues, (allegorizing the incident in John, II:3), and consumed first at the wedding feast was good. No one found fault with it, least of all Jesus Himself. The wine he made (later) may have been better in quality but not different in kind.⁽⁷⁾

The refutation of religious dualism which invaded every realm of thought that Gnosticism touched is the real question at issue here. In

(1) Op.cit., 224(i).

(2) Haer., IV:XVIII; 435(i).

(3) Cf. Haer., IV:XXXI; 3(ii), IV:XXXIII; 14(ii), V:II; 58(ii), V:XIV; 93(ii), V:XV; 97(ii). At IV:XXXVI; 33(ii), men are spoken of as "the property of God".

(4) Haer., III:XVIII; 337(i), III:XXII; 359(i) and IV:VI; 393(i).

(5) Haer., III:XI; 289(i). The Son "dwells with every generation of men". (Haer., IV:XXXIII; 10(ii).) For, "there are many workmen in their generations, but only one householder who calls them together"; (Haer., IV:XXXVI; 34(ii)) and "...the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end". (Haer., IV:VI; 393(i).) This is linked up by Irenaeus with the creative Word in Genesis. "...His Word that never wearies." (Haer., II:II; 123(i).)

(6) Haer., III:VI; 269(i), III:XI; 294(i).

(7) Haer., III:XI; 294(i).

opposition to this dualism in the sphere of anthropology, Irenaeus champions the unity of human personality. Man is a twin creation, compact of the visible and the invisible, the corporeal and the spiritual, neither prior to the other, for both were made together and both are revealed to the world as one. He also champions the unity of the personality of Christ. Jesus combines in his person the human and divine, thus "in a brief comprehensive manner"⁽¹⁾..."consummating the arranged plan of ^{our}salvation".⁽²⁾ Christ did not descend on Jesus, for Jesus and Christ are never separate. The Word which became flesh and was ~~an~~ointed by the Spirit from the Father was, in fact, made Jesus Christ. There is, briefly, but one God, the same as announced both in the prophets and the Gospels.⁽³⁾ Did the Lord perform His wondrous works, asks Irenaeus, only in appearance? Why, the prophets foretold His so performing them, and, as part of God's unfolding of human history, their predictions have come true.⁽⁴⁾ As for the post-resurrection incidents the disciples ate and drank with the risen Lord,⁽⁵⁾ as handed down in the Tradition and believed everywhere by the Church. The birth of Christ is plainly enough reported by the witnesses of the Word. Jesus was born of Mary, and the Gnostics may say that Christ descended upon Jesus from above but Matthew whose Gospel Irenaeus speaks of as being anthropomorphic (according to the Greek), begins his narrative, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ".⁽⁶⁾

(1):⁽²⁾ Haer., III:XVIII; 338(i). All the attributes of Saviourhood in Christ which the Gnostics would treat as emanations of the Ogdoad are united in the Saviour, and all in His incarnation were made flesh.

(3) Haer., III:IX, III:X; 287(i).

(4) Haer., II:XXXII; 245(i).

(5) Haer., III:XII; 304(ii).

(6) Haer., III:XI; 294(i). Irenaeus appeals compellingly to the sacramental principle, in order to establish the community of God and Christ, as well as of God and creation. Vide Haer., IV:XXXIII; 7(ii), Jesus "took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, /

For the received text ("Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise": I:18), the first evangelist might have written, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise": but the Holy Ghost, anticipating those who were to come as corrupters of the truth, declared through him, "...the birth of Christ was on this wise",..."that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same."(1)

Christ, in a word, "took up man into Himself, the invisible becoming visible, the incomprehensible being made comprehensible, the impassible becoming capable of suffering, and the Word being made man, thus summing up all things in Himself".(2)

(6) continued from previous page:

said, "This is my body." The cup likewise "which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood".

(Haer., IV:XVII; 430(i). cf. IV:XVIII; 435(i).)

(1) Haer., III:XVI; 325(i). cf. III:XVI; 324(i).

(2) Haer., III:XVI; 330(i) and passim. cf. also Epideixis, passim.

V. THE FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY: THE MIND OF IRENAEUS IN RELATION TO
CONTEMPORARY GREEK THOUGHT

In making this assessment, we cannot circumvent the views of Harnack who, in keeping with his general position, looks on Irenaeus as a contributor, in his degree and fashion, to the process that resulted in the Hellenization or complete secularization of original Christianity. We shall examine his opinions and conclusions first of all, turning thereafter to a modern scholar who by tradition and conviction leans to a somewhat different point of view. Lawson's "Biblical Theology of S. Irenaeus" devotes a fair amount of space to the subject under review, and on the whole does justice to the main facts of the case, though its author is as much concerned to demonstrate the essential Hebraism as Harnack is to prove the preponderating Hellenism in Irenaeus' scheme of thought.

Harnack's main thesis concentrates on what he would seem to go so far as labelling Irenaeus' gnosticism, at least the latter's indebtedness to Gnostic ideology which forced the early Christian thinkers to make what Harnack calls a selection from tradition.⁽¹⁾ Interests evinced and prosecuted by the Gnostics were on this thesis adopted by the Church;⁽²⁾ and the attempt to fathom Irenaeus from the standpoint of his antithesis to Gnosticism alone is bound to fall short of the truth, for he was actually and at many points involved in it himself.⁽³⁾ Examples of direct borrowing or assimilation on the latter's part are, in Harnack's estimate, the idea that Christianity is real redemption

(1) Dogmen., ii, p. 230.

(2) Harnack, op.cit., p. 231.

(3) Op.cit., ii, p. 231, footnote 1.

effected solely by Christ's appearing;⁽¹⁾ his regarding Christianity as an explanation of the world;⁽²⁾ his method of sketching the history of salvation as "the gradual realising of the οἰκονομία θεοῦ culminating in the deification of believing humanity",⁽³⁾ and the dualistic principle with its "parti-coloured" mythology. To these may be added the following derivative elements, as Harnack interprets them: The idea of Jesus as "the man who first realized in his person the destination of humanity"⁽⁴⁾ (held, it is asserted, by Tatian, Theophilus, Tertullian and Hippolytus); the doctrine of the two Christs;⁽⁵⁾ and the "precise Christological Gnosis"⁽⁶⁾ found in him combined with elements of primitive Christianity. Harnack even goes so far as to speak of Irenaeus' "Gnostic and realistic doctrine of recapitulation".⁽⁷⁾

(1) Dogmen., ii, p. 237.

(2) Op.cit., ii, p. 238.

(3) The method was borrowed, according to Harnack, from the Gnostic teacher Valentinus. (Op.cit., ii, p. 244.)

That some of Irenaeus' statements savour of Gnosticism can hardly be denied. For example, in Haer., III:XIX; 346(1), he has this curious conception of the God-man's dual personality. Jesus is both man and the Word, man that he may undergo temptation, the Word that he might be glorified. The Word remained quiescent while he was being tempted, and caught up his human nature into itself when he won the victory.

Again, in Haer., II:XVII; 176(1) he says it necessarily follows that he who sprang from God as Logos (or that Nous himself, since he is Logos) must be perfect and impassible. For further comments on this topic vide Harnack, Dogmen., ii, pp. 237-238, etc.

The charge of gnosticizing the Gospel levelled by Harnack at Irenaeus does not incriminate him alone. It also involves the Fourth Evangelist. If, as on Irenaeus' own showing, the various titles of the Gnostic Aeons were: Charis (Grace); Aletheia (Truth); Logos (Word); Zoe (Life); Monogenes (Only-Begotten); Paracletus (Advocate), etc., the Fourth Gospel from its use of similar expressions might be brought under suspicion. Vide Haer., I:I; 5 (1), footnote 1 et passim.

(4) Dogmen., ii, pp. 271-272.

(5) Patibilis and ἀπαθείς

(6) Op.cit., p. 297. The "history of salvation approved by the Church" with the theological propositions of Irenaeus and Tertullian generally, "represented a Gnosis 'toned down' and reconciled with monotheism". (Op. cit., p. 305.)

(7) Op.cit., p. 272.

In this the Apologists are alleged to have played their part. Their mode of argument against the Gnostics, so far as content is concerned, was of "an abstract, philosophico-rational" type,⁽¹⁾ and, considered as scientific theology, was simply a form of Gnosticism,⁽²⁾ an outcome to which Irenaeus is held to have contributed in no small degree himself, by making out theological gnosis to be simply a continuation of faith. He simply overlaid this speculative interest and preoccupation with Biblical ideas.⁽³⁾

For Harnack, in fact, the great historic watershed of Christianity is the substitution of deification for the primitive eschatological or chiliastic hope. When Christianity, he says, "was represented as the belief in the incarnation of God" and as the sure hope of the deification of man, a speculation that had originally never got beyond the fringe of religious knowledge was made the central point of the system, and the simple content of the Gospel was obscured.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Dogmen., ii, pp. 249-250.

(2) Op.cit., ii, p. 252.

(3) Op.cit., ii, p. 270.

(4) Op.cit., ii, p. 318. This is not to say, however, that the simple faith was deliberately changed. The process, by and large, Harnack assures us, was of an unselfconscious character on the part of those involved in it. A sea-change occurred, for all that, and this is easily explained. It was simply that Tradition and reason had replaced "charisms" as courts of appeal. The Catholic Fathers felt the need of a rational proof against both the heathen and their opponents; but they needed it in their own interest and in that of their fellow-believers, too. Rational theology in this situation, set side by side with the Tradition presented no immediate problem. (Dogmen., ii, p. 232.) Irenaeus, in fact, equated as much rationalism as was felt to be absolutely needful with "the hallowed doctrines of tradition" without regarding it as alien or incompatible (op.cit., ii, p. 233). He warns his readers against subtle speculations, but falls back himself on speculative theories assumed to be traditional (op.cit., loc.cit.). He displays, according to Harnack, "a happy blindness to the gulf which lay between the Christian tradition and the world of ideas prevailing at that time", and sketches out "that future dogmatic method according to which the /

Lawson's chief interest, the Biblical content of the teaching of Irenaeus, is not really our concern, except in so far as it may serve to throw some light on the present problem.

The author in question appears anxious to establish Irenaeus' essential Biblicalism, and appeals to certain authorities supporting the case for the unspeculative character of Irenaeus' mind and thought. Duncker, for instance, is invoked. Irenaeus, he considers, is not a speculative writer;⁽¹⁾ similarly Beauzart who contends that the latter's main concern is of a practical and polemical character.⁽²⁾ His master-idea against the Gnostics, it is asserted, is the formula, "One Creator-God revealed in Christ" which rests, Beauzart maintains, upon the proof of Scripture supremely,⁽³⁾ though reason is not barred. By quotations of this nature, Lawson leads up to the conclusion that Irenaeus "does not investigate the mystery of the relation of the Divine Logos⁽⁴⁾ to God", but "quits metaphysics"..."for a Christ who as man can suffer with us, and who as God can forgive",⁽⁵⁾ and comments further on, "...he is Hebraic and utterly un-Greek in his lack of care

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the theology compiled by an eclectic process" (an idea worked out fully by Harnack, at Dogmen., ii, pp. 245f.) "is to be nothing else than the simple faith itself". He never explains how far unexplained faith can be sufficient for most Christians, "and without this explanation the great problems cannot be solved", (op.cit., ii, p. 245). In the Western Churches of the succeeding century, "the rule of faith", Harnack tells us, "and theology nowhere came into collision, because Irenaeus and his younger contemporaries did not perceive the blending of these ingredients as other than pure faith", (op.cit., p. 312). In Irenaeus, to put it otherwise, the fides credenda and theology are completely intermixed. He "succeeded in amalgamating philosophic theology and the statements of ecclesiastical tradition viewed as doctrines", (op.cit., p. 236).

- (1) Des heiligen Irenäus Christologie: Lawson, p. 12.
- (2) Essai sur la Théologie d'Irénée, pp. 1, 5, 6: Lawson, loc.cit.
- (3) Op.cit., p. 31: Lawson, loc.cit., (quoting Beauzart). p. 12.
- (4) Lawson, p. 13, quoting Beauzart, p. 50.
- (5) Beauzart, p. 100, quoted by Lawson, p. 15.

for abstract speculation as such...a follower of James rather than of John, and would have been more at home in Jerusalem than in Alexandria... the type of the Biblical or Hebraic Christian"⁽¹⁾..."It can be shown that every important and constructive element in the theology of S. Irenaeus is fundamentally of Biblical or Hebraic inspiration."⁽²⁾ Furthermore he is essentially Pauline. This is perhaps," concludes Lawson, "the most important thing to be said of this Christian Father."⁽³⁾⁽³⁾

The latter may be the most important thing predicable of Irenaeus, but by no means exhausts everything that Lawson has to say, his glaringly conflicting observation, for example, to the effect that Irenaeus' writings "are packed with statements about God and the Logos which are quite after the manner of the Apologists, and could well have come from Alexandria";⁽⁴⁾ or another similar remark in close proximity, "It is clear that the doctrine of God in S. Irenaeus is not wholly Biblical,"⁽⁵⁾ which give their author the appearance of flatly contradicting himself; or is this recognition that Irenaeus was in many aspects of his teaching anything but exclusively Biblical forced upon him by the facts? His final position is considerably modified, if not logically reversed by his description of the Biblical element in Irenaeus as an instinctive "Hebraic interest" acting the part of "an effectual counterpoise to the Hellenic interest of Gentile Christianity, which," he admits, "is also there".⁽⁶⁾ Examination of his very able and exhaustive study leads increasingly to awareness of this Greek

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- (1) Lawson, p. 118.
 - (2) Lawson, p. 116.
 - (3) Lawson, p. 115.
 - (4) Lawson, op.cit., p. 132.
 - (5) Op.cit., loc.cit.
 - (6) Op.cit., pp. 116-117.

ingredient, and closer scrutiny will reveal how far Irenaeus was indebted to the heritage of Hellenistic thought, especially in some of the cardinal conceptions of his creed, the doctrines for instance of divine creation and redemption by recapitulation; the Logos theology; and the problem of evil, which we shall now, according to Lawson's exposition, consider briefly in the light of their Greek affinities.

"The aim of the whole course of created nature," Lawson quotes, "is the self-revelation of the love of God, to the end of the education of man."⁽¹⁾ The presupposition of this meaningful pronouncement is the anthropological standpoint from which Irenaeus views man's creation and his creaturely constitution. Man is made in the image (Εἰκὼν) and likeness (ὁμοίωσις) of God, and was possessed of both as he came, new created from God's hands. He lost the divine likeness at the Fall, but the image is inalienable, being of the very essence of his human creaturehood, and prior to the advent of the holy Spirit. In virtue of this inalienable possession man attained originally to the likeness of God, and may, despite the Fall, attain to it again, the Spirit co-operating with his willing obedience to this end. God has in Christ provided man with the effectual means of retrieving the lost likeness to Himself, and rising to his final destiny which is communion with the divine. "The hidden Father makes Himself known progressively from eternity by the Logos through Creation, the Law, and the Prophets and the whole teaching activity of the incarnate Christ."⁽²⁾ This recapitulation is not, according to Lawson, "the recovery of a broken,

(1) p. 8 (from Duncker, pp. 76, 78). Irenaeus himself expresses this succinctly when he says, "The creation was made for man and not man for the creation." (Haer., V:XXIX; 133(ii).)

(2) p. 11 where Lawson is quoting again from Duncker (op.cit.), pp. 256-9.

pristine unity, but the gathering together of objects now apart and unrelated into a final perfect unity":⁽¹⁾ "From the philosophic aspect this represents the realization of the original goal of the human race, by Christ as man"...⁽²⁾ "According to the optimistic Irenaeus the great need of man is not for regeneration, but for the restoration of the lost Likeness of God."⁽³⁾ Baptism is a means of regeneration, and the Eucharist "brings divinization to those who communicate".⁽⁴⁾

Jesus began afresh creating a new humanity.⁽⁵⁾ He not only became flesh, but passed through every stage of fleshly being,⁽⁶⁾ that every man at every stage might have him as a model in the quest for ultimate fellowship and communion with God. It is chiefly through knowledge, enlightenment, and the liberty He brings that Jesus restores humanity to incorruption, recovers the lost likeness to the Father of his spirit, and enables man eventually to be like God Himself.⁽⁷⁾ In order to ensure complete salvation, God has only to be seen.⁽⁸⁾

(1) Lawson, p. 141.

(2) Lawson, p. 15, quoting Beuzart, pp. 107-8.

(3) Lawson, p. 15, quoting Beuzart, pp. 119-120.

(4) Op.cit., p. 17, quoting Beuzart, pp. 162-163, 166.

(5) Haer., III:XVIII; 338(i), according to the Syriac. The Latin has "in seipso recapitulavit". Cf. Haer., III:XVIII; 344(i).

(6) Haer., III:XVIII; 343(i).

(7) The Logos Victor idea. Haer., II:XX; 191(i), IV:XX; 440(i), IV:XXXVI; 34(ii), V:X; 79(ii), V:XII; 85(ii). At IV:XX; 442(i) it is said that God is seen prophetically through the Spirit, adoptively through the Son, and paternally in the Kingdom of Heaven. In the rich imagery which Irenaeus brings to the filling out of this conception we encounter the Physician-Shepherd idea, beloved of St. John. (Cf. Haer., III:V; 267-268 (i), IV:XXIV; 457-458(i).)

(8) Haer., IV:XXXVIII; 44(ii). Lawson (p. 129) quotes Bousset's Kyrios Christos, p. 347, in support of this idea. In Jesus as God becoming tangible and visible Bousset would have us see "a doctrine akin to the *Εἰσὶν ὁ Θεὸς* of Hellenistic piety". But Lawson (p. 132) disagrees with the view expressed by Loofs (Studium, p. 148) that the conception of God found in Irenaeus "rests more on the philosophy of the time than on the traditional revelation of God".

The ladder of attainment is in Jesus set before us, reaching upward to where God is all in all, evolution being obviously inherent in this basic notion of man's moral and spiritual educability.⁽¹⁾ God, Irenaeus says, was continually drawing on His people through successive covenants; they, through faith, were constantly progressing toward complete salvation, and He adjusted the human race in a variety of ways to agreement with this goal.⁽²⁾ Indeed, it was for growth and increase that Jesus was designed, the great and glorious consummation being what Irenaeus calls "promotion" unto God,⁽³⁾ Who in Jesus became man, that through Him man might become divine.⁽⁴⁾ The manner in which

- (1) All things have been created for the benefit of our human nature which is "ripening for immortality". (Haer., V:XIX; 133(ii).) Man comes to maturity in the things of time which God has made for him, that he may produce the fruit of immortality. (Haer., IV:V; 386(i).)
- (2) Haer., IV:XV; 421(i), IV:IX; 402(i), IV:XI; 406(i). Man at creation is yet an infant. He is fed, first with milk, and then with the meat of perfection, the bread of immortality. (Haer., IV:XXXVIII; 42(ii).)
- (3) Haer., III:XX; 349(i). How near this might look to paganism does not immediately appear till we remember that the gods of Greece and the emperors latterly of Rome were all, in one way or another, "promoted" to divinity.
- (4) Haer., III:X; 282(i). Bousset in his *Kyrios Christos*, p. 342, is made out by Lawson as regarding this as "a piece of Hellenistic piety". The latter contends, however, that the root of the idea is traceable to St. John. (Vide *The Biblical Theology of S. Irenaeus*, p. 160.) Harnack disagrees, of course, all along the line. For him the deification idea in Irenaeus is sub-Christian, inadmissible and unconnected with the historic Jesus.

Turner disagrees with Harnack in his turn. He simply sees the figure that emerges as "The Logos Paedagogos leading his people into an ever increasing experience of illumination; the Christus Victor offering vicarious victory to mankind", these being "partial significances of that truth upon which the deification theory /

Irenaeus has conceived of man's creation is our best indication as to how he conceived of the Creator Who is, for him, as much the Architect and Governor of the cosmos as the righteous Judge of all the earth, the Holy One of Israel.

Again on Lawson's showing, Irenaeus is regarded as traditionally Johannine rather than Pauline in his teaching about Christ. Indeed, the real importance of Irenaeus' work is considered to be his transformation of the Logos-doctrine into a part of ecclesiastical Christology.⁽¹⁾ It is conceded that the Logos-idea was adopted in this connection so as to satisfy those who desired a mediator. God was for Irenaeus undeniably the living God of Hebraism: but he was witnessing to this living God in a Hellenic atmosphere where, between a remote deity, the Absolute, and the material world some sort of intermediary was felt to be required. Thus "with his deep-seated instinct for tradition", he constantly employed the Apologetic Logos-theology, "The Word" being one of the commonest titles attributed to our Lord. "The Rule of Truth which we hold," quotes Lawson, "is, that there is one God Almighty, who made all things by His Word."⁽²⁾ This is the rational principle in all things, so dear to Greek philosophy, and so basic (even though sub-consciously) to the whole object and activity of science in our day. It is in Irenaeus linked up with the

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theory fundamentally insists: that Redemption, essentially, centrally, consists in Transfiguration, the lifting of human life out of a setting which primarily defeats and baffles because it is set too low by the participation, through all that the Historical Christ was, and achieved, in the very life and character of the Triune God Himself". (The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption, p. 122.)

(1) Lawson, p. 13 (quoting Beauzart, p. 50).

(2) Haer., I:XXII; 84(1).

rule of natural law, connected in God's purpose of redemption with the origin and destiny of man. The image of God, implanted inalienably in the latter is the presupposition of his freedom and his moral development; it is the ground of his present fellowship, as it is also the guarantee of his ultimate capacity for complete communion with God.

Nowhere more strikingly than in regard to the problem of evil does the contrast between the Hebraic and Greek elements in Irenaeus' teaching impress itself on us. The character of any system claiming to be Christian, whatever its emphasis, may be readily assessed by the place it assigns to this dark problem in the universal theorizing and experience of men. It is for the theologian bound up inescapably with the question of human sin, which Irenaeus is, significantly, inclined to treat lightly.⁽¹⁾ Again, his conception of creation naturally determines his idea of redemption, and of the state or situation from which man is held to be redeemed. His evolutionary ideal, his view of human history as the story of the pilgrimage of man in quest of higher enlightenment; his comments on Christ the Logos, as Teacher and model for man's emulation and eventual perfection, all signify his stand in the original sin debate. He leans to the conviction that man fell, but falls to rise again. The ladder reaching earthward beckons him like Jacob at Bethel, and Christ, like the angels of God ascending and descending is his mediator of the visio dei.

Man, it appears in Irenaeus' picture, was a child, a Dawn-man, in that far-off day when God created him, with a long way still to go towards his full spiritual development. He comes home to full

(1) Beazart, p. 116, quoted by Lawson, p. 15.

possession of his divine birthright in Christ through whom he at last is deified.

This is more of a deduction made by Irenaeus from his own reconstruction of the facts than the plain teaching of the Bible, even as interpreted by Paul. To quote Beuzart, "In the Saving Work of Christ the emphasis is upon the Incarnation as being Eternal Life, rather than upon the redemptive death."⁽¹⁾ Very briefly, but, one feels, conclusively, the latter goes on to say, "The problem 'Whence is evil?' (in Irenaeus) is not resolved."⁽²⁾

Irenaeus, it is said, was not too much concerned to explain to the troubled intellect why certain things should be. The troubled intellect, however, for that very reason, was all the more liable to seek out those who were, and they were mainly of the Gnostic intellectual type. The common ground of all the Gnostic systems was the antithesis between the material and the spiritual. The problem of evil was the main problem, we can see. "Why is there a material creation which, if not the enemy of the spiritual, is a hampering burden on the soul?" To this type of question Irenaeus (and the Johannine School generally) give no practical reply.⁽³⁾

(1) p. 102 (Lawson, loc.cit.).

(2) p. 72 (Lawson, p. 14).

(3) That Irenaeus either cannot or will not enter deeply into the problem is all too self-evident. Admittedly, he recognizes evil as a factor in man's experience and a force in human life. His assertion that little children have no sense of it is something of a tautology; but, negatively, it recognizes the fact of sin elsewhere. (Vide Haer., IV:XXVIII; 473(i).) Adam was driven out of Paradise, for example, so that ~~sin~~^{evil} should not be "interminable and irremediable". (Haer., III:XXIII; 367(i).) Again it is said, "Neither the nature of any created thing...nor the weakness of the flesh can prevail against the will of God." (Haer., V:V; 67(ii).) Irenaeus merely reiterates the statement of fact given in Scripture, without attempting to go more deeply into it, and having to his own satisfaction /

Evil for them is a wholly inward, individual affair.⁽¹⁾ This is, of course, a perfectly logical deduction from the deification-theology which, for this school of thought, embodies the ideal goal of the Christian life. Evil is viewed accordingly as a form of deprivation in the human substance, or as a defect whose locus is rather in the intellect than in the volitional life of man. We have here the basis, incidentally, of all Hellenic mysticism, salvation being man's ascension to the beatific vision, his reunion with the Pleroma, or as

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satisfaction exploded the Gnostic theory on the subject, seems to consider it disposed of without further explanation or reflection on his part. God has prepared eternal fire from the beginning for the transgressors, but as to the cause of the nature of such transgressors "neither has any Scripture informed us, nor an apostle told us, nor has the Lord instructed us". (Haer., II:XXVIII; 226(i).) In fact, we are not supposed to ask. The Church is a garden (paradisus) planted in this world, and men therein may eat of every kind of fruit (i.e. "every Scripture of the Lord"), except of that which is forbidden ("the heretical discord": Haer., V:XX; 109(ii)). Since "we know but in part, we ought to leave all sorts of difficult questions in the hands of Him Who in some measure ... bestows grace on us". (Haer., II:XXVIII; 226(i).) There are many things lying at our very feet which remain a mystery, for instance, the rising of the Nile. How much more so, then, those things which are of heaven. (Haer., II:XXVIII; 220(i).) Similarly of the Scriptures, there are some matters which by the grace of God we are able to explain; others we must simply leave to God, (op.cit., p. 221): the question, for example, "What was God doing before He made the world?" (op.cit., p. 222), or, as regards the Logos (Christ), "Who shall describe His generation?" (Isaiah, LIII:8; Haer., II:XXVIII; 224(i)). There is a passage beginning at Haer., II:XXV; 213(i) which might well be Irenaeus' Hymn of Praise to the creation, extolling the harmonious perfection of the Creator's work. Cf. Haer., II:XXX; 232-233(i), I:XII; 49-50(i). His last resort is the introduction of the doctrine of predestination. It is sufficient to say of those things whose origin we are unable to explain that God pre-arranged them so to be. (Haer., II:II; 122(i).) Cf. Haer., III:XXII; 360-361(i), III:XXVII; 336(i), IV:XIV; 417(i).

- (1) Irenaeus does not regard the body as sinful. Distrust of the body and things material was an understandable reaction to gross licentiousness in Roman society and the infiltration into Christianity of Gnostic and Manichaean notions. Augustine, both a Platonist and a Manichaean in his time, was to some extent responsible.

otherwise expressed. We look in vain, however, for a solution of the problem which the Synoptic Gospels and experience pose for men in every age. There is no answer to the questions asked by the moral philosopher; but this is Irenaeus' final standing-ground, and with this he seems satisfied.

Lawson makes generous enough admission of the effect of Hellenism on the pattern of Irenaeus' thought. One of the greatest single influences in this direction was, it transpires, the tradition of the Church Apologists. "As the name implies," writes Lawson, "these first theologians, who worked even before Irenaeus, were inspired by the aim of presenting Christianity in a manner attractive to the Greek world. It is therefore natural that in their work the Hellenic atmosphere should prevail... The men of that generation were now honoured by Irenaeus and his fellows as the Elders, the Martyrs and the Saints. With his love of the solid tradition of the Church, S. Irenaeus would hardly have thought of going back upon what they had said,"⁽¹⁾ and their object was to show where Christianity was akin to Hellenistic thought. As we should expect, he owes a solid part of this tradition to the Fourth Evangelist, coming, as he did, from close proximity to Ephesus where the Johannine corpus very probably arose, and being himself, through Papias and Polycarp, a pupil of the latter school of thought. John's Gospel represents the philosophical or intellectual aspect of salvation which is arrived at mainly through a knowledge of the truth, and with the partial obscuration of the Pauline emphasis on eschatology, Irenaeus shares this philosophical or intellectual brand of thought. This is not, however, to deny the non-Hellenic or Hebraic

(1) op.cit., p. 134.

element that enters into his thinking to a no less marked degree. Lawson allows full credit for the latter, as we have already said. He cannot, in fact, do other than allow both elements full value in the end. Irenaeus combines such a variety of traditional materials, theological alternatives and philosophical ingredients that too much stress on any one of them would do injustice to the rest, or give rise, as with Harnack, to a single emphasis with a one-sided point of view. Study of Irenaeus' writings yields the impression that he simply laid these different strata of ideas side by side, and filled out his argument, now from the one, now from the other, without too much concern for their coherent unity. "Philosophy may be used both to amplify devotion, and to provide a medium whereby religion may be expounded," observes Lawson and comments, "We must admit that S. Irenaeus does not rise to this level of systematic intellectual coherence. He does, however, preserve the materials for this synthesis...His witness is thus most valuable. It prefigures much of the healthiest and profoundest Christian thought of later ages...(1) He played an important part "in transplanting the Faith out of the rich but narrow seed-bed of Jewish Christianity into the spacious but unsheltered expanses of the pagan world,(2) an absolutely necessary task, if the Church was to fulfil her mission", for "it could not be that the whole Gentile world should become Jewish, and, discarding the ethical and intellectual values of Greek thought, become content to nourish her religion exclusively upon the Bible...Therefore the only way in which a universal mission could be carried on was to attempt to embody the

(1) Lawson, p. 134.

(2) Lawson, pp. 293, 164.

unique religious values of primitive Christianity in the terms of current secular thought, and to unite the Gospel with the heritage of Greek philosophy...Hence the experiments of the Fourth Evangelist, and after him of the Apologists, are spiritually justified. The double-sidedness⁽¹⁾ of Irenaeus is a token that he is further along the course of these experiments. That he preserves so many vital Biblical elements is a mark that the tradition for which he speaks had not

- (1) Lawson (op.cit., p. 292) describes Irenaeus as "homo unius libri", but at p. 117 again he allows that he was "not uninfluenced by the culture of his day" (which was largely available, then as now, through the liberal medium of books). Lawson also quotes Beauzart (p. 173) to the effect that Irenaeus was "one of the least Hellenized of the ecclesiastical writers" (op.cit., p. 17), but he himself observes (p. 163) that one may regard Irenaeus as "more avowedly part of the Gentile world than is any New Testament writer".

Loofs regards the contradictory character in question as due to Irenaeus' "rather unintelligent reproduction of a wide variety of sources and sub-sources" (Theophilus von Antiochen adversus Marcionem, p. 423, quoted by Lawson, pp. 136-137). It might be equally Irenaeus' situation at the cross-roads of Church history. Duncker observes that he is intermediate between the churches of the East and the churches of the West (Des heiligen Irenaus Christologie, p. 159, quoted by Lawson, p. 9, and cf. p. 293). Or it well might be the combination of a Hellenic form with an Hebraic content in Irenaeus' writings.

Again, Lawson says (p. 17) that Irenaeus is oriental in his doctrine of God, and of Christ, and Western in his dogma of the Church, though not Western in his view of sin and salvation. (quoting Beauzart). Further, it is suggested that Irenaeus combined the Pauline with the Johannine aspects of the New Testament witness, indeed, the double-sidedness under discussion is thought to be due to Irenaeus' use of the terminology of Greek though in the Johannine manner as a vehicle of Christian truth (op.cit., p. 163).

It is also this writer's opinion that Irenaeus blends the evolutionary with the revolutionary emphases. Jesus comes not only to teach. He also comes to act. Proclamation and performance are complementary conceptions (pp. 196, 289). We see this from the exposition of the doctrine of recapitulation at great length on the one hand, and the unvarnished chiliasm of Irenaeus on the other.

According to Harnack, he has also the two Christs (as we have already noted), the Christ of Paul, and the Messianic figure of the Jewish Apocalypses, a further compromise between the older Church tradition, and the "acutely Hellenized Christianity of the theologians", by Harnack's interpretation. (Dogmen., ii, p. 297).

Finally, Crutwell declares that Irenaeus is "far more of a divine than of a philosopher" (op.cit., i, pp. 285-286); but his statement is an admission that Irenaeus combines both.

compromised the Faith with pagan thought." (1) In final appreciation of our author's contribution to the upbuilding of the holy catholic Faith, Lawson has this to say:

"He essayed the problems of Christian philosophy and cosmology, and to such good effect that he left behind him what is perhaps the most satisfying attempt at a systematic Christian theology that has been preserved to us from the great formative period which lies between the close of the New Testament and the opening of the Arian controversy. From the secular culture of his age and the Apologetic tradition, the Greek wind blows strongly through his work. Nevertheless the Faith has not sunk to a bare moralism, nor been refined away into philosophy ...that one who is so typical of historic, ecclesiastical Christianity, and who was himself so formative in its development should on examination be found so authentic and apostolic a Christian is most significant." (2)

It might be inferred from certain passages in Irenaeus that he spurned the culture media of the Hellenistic world. The Saviours^{, apostles} who came, he says, had "nothing in common with the doctrine of the Gentiles..." (3) He accuses the heretics of adapting and distorting the Theogony of Antiphanes, and of bringing together "the things which have been said by all those who were ignorant of God, and who are

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- (1) Lawson here postulates a "legitimate Christian Hellenism", combined of the primitive faith and the best in Greek thought - the ideal of the Apologists. Inasmuch as this is found in germ in the Johannine literature, it may be acknowledged as Biblical, and Irenaeus is described as "a notable example" in its progressive development (op.cit., pp. 164-165).
- (2) Lawson, op.cit., p. 294. Irenaeus, says Hatch, "helped the Christian communities to believe as an intellectual conviction that which they had first accepted as a spiritual revelation" (op.cit., pp. 202f, 207).
- (3) Haer., IV:XXXV; 22-23(ii).

termed philosophers".⁽¹⁾ Basilides and his like are accused in particular of transferring to the system of their own doctrine the "things which lie outside of the truth"⁽²⁾ meaning the opinions and theories of the heathen, or Hellenism in general. There is a particularly well-known passage that is often quoted as proof positive that he stood wholeheartedly for a purely unsophisticated faith. "It is... better and more profitable to belong to the simple and unlettered class ...better...that one should have no knowledge whatever of any one reason why a single thing in creation has been made, but should believe in God, and continue in his love, than that, puffed up through knowledge of this kind, he should fall away from that love which is the life of man..." There Irenaeus, as someone has observed, attests his solidarity with the great mass of ordinary, believing people in the Church, but to enlarge unduly on this aspect is to miss the vital point, for he defines his meaning when quoting Paul ("Knowledge puffeth up,"⁽³⁾ etc.), he says, "...not that he meant to inveigh against a true knowledge of God, for in that case he would have accused himself;⁽⁴⁾ but, because he knew that some puffed up by the pretence of knowledge, fall away from the love of God..."⁽⁵⁾

Irenaeus' most convincing answer is contained in a long passage⁽⁶⁾

(1) Haer., II:XIV; 160-161(i).

(2) Haer., II:XXXI; 240(i).

(3) 1 Cor., VIII:1-2.

(4) So, too, would Irenaeus. Philosophy in the later stages of Greek culture was, according to Hatch, "less thought than literature... the exegesis of received doctrines", yet this and the contradictions it involved resulted in the diffusion of philosophy which "entered into education and developed a propaganda" (op.cit., pp. 121-122). It is difficult to see how Irenaeus could have possibly escaped such influence. He distrusted the attempt to interpret Christianity in terms of Greek philosophy, says Rainy, but is not irrational about it (op.cit., p. 181). Cf. Ziegler, Irenaeus der Bischof von Lyon, pp. 16-24.

(5) Haer., II:XXVI; 215(i).

(6) Haer., IV:XXX; 475f.(i).

which is worth quoting more or less in its entirety. Like Clement of Alexandria, he is justifying the spoiling of the Egyptians on the eve of departure from the land of bondage by the children of Israel. It was God's purpose to provide this prototype in the history of the chosen people as a parallel to what was one day to be the experience of the Church. As the tabernacle in the wilderness was constructed out of the appropriated things, so Christians have every right, Irenaeus reasons, to appropriate things serviceable from "the mammon of unrighteousness", for, he continues, "from what source do we derive the houses in which we dwell, the garments wherein we are clothed, the vessels which we use, and everything else ministering to our everyday life, unless it be from those things which, when we were Gentiles, we acquired by avarice, or received them from our heathen parents, relations or friends who unrighteously obtained them - not to mention that even now we acquire such things when we are in the faith...in what way are the heathen debtors to us, from whom we receive both gain and profit? Whatsoever they amass with labour, these things do we make use of without labour, although we are in the faith". There he pays tribute to the benefits derived from pagan culture, and goes on to eulogize the blessings of Roman rule, through the instrumentality of which "the world is in peace, and we walk on the highways without fear, and sail where we will".⁽¹⁾ The Gnostic can only stand upon his avowed independence of these things by returning to something resembling a sub-human mode of life.

God has Himself made provision that in a way consistent with justice all things shall turn out for good. In using the goods

(1) Haer., IV:XXX; 478(i).

bestowed on them by non-Christian society, Christians redeem their own from the hand of the stranger, so to speak. But how can the Christian even say 'stranger'? As if the world were not really God's possession! ... "For whatsoever we acquired from unrighteousness, when we were heathen, we are proved righteous," he concludes, "when we have become believers, by applying it to the advantage of the Lord."⁽¹⁾

(1) Haer., IV:XXX; 479(i). His position regarding Greek culture is ultimately that of Clement of Alexandria. There is little doubt that when in the passage quoted he speaks of the things "acquired from unrighteousness when we were heathen" his mind must have dwelt on more than merely material advantages. These popularly esteemed utilities were simply the by-products of the progress resulting from a "civilized" way of life that laid tremendous stress on knowledge, much as the numerous utilities of our own society are the by-products of a science whose ultimate concern with the physical universe is to fathom its mysteries, whose concern, that is to say, is basically religious.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Much has been said and written on the faith/philosophy debate since Harnack's day, yet his remains the clearest, possibly because it is still the most uncompromising statement of the case against the admission of anything considered to be extraneous, into the Church's simple faith. In his *Dogmengeschichte*, Volume II, he gives his reasons for concluding that, like Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, though not in the same degree (and always with important emphases peculiar to himself), contributed his quota to the ultimate hellenization of the original Christian belief.

We have already noted his statement that Gnosticism compelled the Church to make what he calls "a selection from tradition".⁽¹⁾ As to this, there is no dispute. The canon of the New Testament is, in its way, the indiminishable residue remaining after the decisive conflict with the upsurgent heresies. Again, according to Harnack, certain of the interests pursued by Gnosticism were adopted by the Church and influential on her teachers, and the price of preserving the Tradition against Gnosticism, he thinks, was "the adoption by the Church of a series of Gnostic formulae".⁽²⁾ Churchmen, though with hesitation, acquired the adversary's way of looking at things. "The old Catholic Fathers permanently settled a great part of early tradition for Christendom, but at the same time promoted the gradual Hellenization of Christianity,"⁽³⁾ and this was, in toto, simply the "...learned construction of religion with the scientific means of those days...

(1) *Dogmen.*, ii, p. 230.

(2) *Op.cit.*, p. 247.

(3) *Op.cit.*, loc.cit.

As soon as Churchmen...proceed to put the same questions as the "Gnostics", they are "obliged to work by their method". There is "scarcely a problem" that Irenaeus, Tertullian and Hippolytus "propounded and discussed as a result of their own thirst for knowledge".⁽¹⁾ They got their inspiration in all such matters from the Gnostics. Irenaeus, for example, had to adopt the Gnostic exegesis in explaining the New Testament from a scientific and mystical point of view.⁽²⁾

Irenaeus also draws on Gnosticism, Harnack contends, when he equates salvation with the appearance of Jesus as the second Adam, or the simple acknowledgment of this fact,⁽³⁾ or when he thinks of the Word made flesh as the incarnation of God, and of essential Christianity as belief in this proposition, coupled with the sure hope of the deification of man. The transmission of the thesis by which Gnosticism was overthrown involved, it is averred, the transmission of certain things not in the fides credenda, e.g., the Logos doctrine essential to the doctrine of the revelation of God and the two Testaments. Thus a merely peripheral interest came to usurp the central place, and the simple content of the Gospel was obscured.⁽⁴⁾

However Harnack looks at it, the conclusion is the same; but was the outcome, as he seems to think, a tragedy for Christianity? "Interpretation" of "facts" can be largely a matter of emphasis or even of opinion, and strong personal conviction is no guarantee of truth. Other writers no less sincere in their convictions have thought or think

(1) Op.cit., p. 253.

(2) Op.cit., p. 252.

(3) Dogmen., ii, p. 288.

(4) Op.cit., p. 318.

quite differently, and, in fact, prefer to disagree. Lawson, for instance, says, "...the experiments of the Fourth Evangelist, and after him of the Apologists, are spiritually justified," and in this he receives the weightiest support from H.E.W. Turner who asserts that the Church needed "...to come to terms with the massive intellectual construction of Greek philosophy upon which by this time much of the religion of the Graeco-Roman world had come to base itself. The problem of communication needed," the latter continues, "to be honestly faced if Christianity were not to become simply a 'warm' emotional cult, similar in effect, if not in structure and material to the Eastern mystery religions, competing for the satisfaction of the religious needs of the world, and the Church more than a home of like-minded pietists without any fruitful means of impingement upon the intellectual as well as the emotional thought-climate of contemporary society...The principal problems for theological consideration were...those which offered the most important bridgeheads into paganism or which gave the greatest difficulty to Pagans who wished to make contact with Christianity".⁽¹⁾

Harnack's thesis, notwithstanding, has always had its advocates. W.D. Niven in his "Conflicts of the Early Church" seems to support him against Loisy in contending that faith in Jesus was transformed in consequence of the early Church's traffic with Gnostic speculation. The Church rejected resolutely the Gnostic exaltation of knowledge above faith, yet the creed which she rescued out of the conflict was, in his opinion, not much different from what the Gnostics meant by gnosis. Faith is thus held to be assent to a saving knowledge rather than the saving faith of the New Testament, in consequence of which the

(1) The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption, p. 17.

simple question, "Do you believe in Christ?" fades into the question, "Do you believe thus and thus concerning Christ?" which in this writer's estimate is a "totally different thing". No doubt the simple Gospel is still there but it is embedded to the point of being buried in a complicated system of religious philosophy. "Christianity was thoroughly Hellenized as soon as Greek minds like Clement of Alexandria busied themselves with Christian truth."⁽¹⁾

So far as Irenaeus was like Clement racially and culturally, a child of the Hellenistic world, we must take this judgment to include and apply to him as well; but we have touched here on a point of prime importance and might look at this more closely before winding up the debate.

The authority just quoted simply equates Hellenism with Gnostic speculation, but were these two the same? What, actually, was Gnosticism and how did it stand related to the Church's presumably unsophisticated faith? The final question asked by Dr. Niven is, "Did Gnosticism win after all?" Now, that is a question we can answer right away. Surely the fact that Gnosticism was, for serious intents and purposes, a defeated force by the end of the second century is proof enough that the Catholic faith had won the fight that Irenaeus very largely fought for it. The question, however, presupposes much more than a simple answer of this type. The suspicion lingers on that, despite the victory gained externally for catholic Christianity, the Gnostic teaching, nevertheless, overcame its conqueror without the latter being quite aware of it. Up till quite recently the issue has been clouded by the paucity, almost the non-existence of an authentic

(1) Op.cit., p. 169.

Gnostic literature, early enough in origin to let the true character of Gnosticism be seen in more detail and so more thoroughly understood. The judgment of Christian critics and their polemical reactions in the early centuries are all we have had so far to indicate the nature of the system they attacked or criticised. Within recent years, however, a significant discovery has been made which not only throws light on some of these obscurities, but ultimately may upset certain theories on the subject long and tenaciously maintained.

In the Haer., III:XI; 296(1) Irenaeus refers to a "Gospel of Truth" in use amongst the Valentinians. Until quite recently this was known solely by its title and the mention Irenaeus makes of it; but it has since his time come dramatically to light in a collection of Gnostic MSS, located at Nag Hamadi in Upper Egypt in 1945, and comprising thirteen codices which appear to have formed part of a Gnostic library. Twelve of them are now housed in the Coptic museum at Cairo, while the thirteenth, the one that interests us most in this connection was acquired by the Jung Institute in Zurich in May, 1952.⁽¹⁾ Here for the first time at our disposal is a considerable mass of Gnostic source-material far surpassing the fragmentary relics of a later and comparatively degenerate Gnosticism like that represented by the Pistis Sophia.⁽²⁾ Most if not all of the Nag Hamadi MSS⁽³⁾ are translations or adaptations of Greek originals which, of course, would be much older. The latter were already known to Irenaeus, c. 180 A.D.,⁽⁴⁾ either from knowledge of their titles or acquaintance with their text.

(1) The Jung Codex, Pref., p. 5.

(2) Op.cit., p. 27.

(3) Written at various dates in the 3rd and 4th centuries. (Jung Codex, p. 17.)

(4) Jung Codex, pp. 18, 43.

The general collection forming a sample of the Gnostic apocrypha (defined by Puech as "good tidings reserved for a privileged élite")⁽¹⁾ contains two items which connect us with Irenaeus. The first of these is, in a place somewhat by itself, The Apocryphon or Secret Book of John on which Irenaeus may have drawn, c. 180, for his description of the Barbelo-Gnostics. This is considered to have been a basic text-book of the Nag Hammadi sectaries, since it has been found in three different Codex copies, and in a fourth of more recent date reported in 1898.⁽²⁾ Puech conjectures that the Apocryphon in question embodied "a more or less mythical system of Gnosis which Valentinus would have partly taken over", stamped with his own peculiar genius and elaborated in a more speculative way.⁽³⁾ The other item is the most interesting and, for our immediate purpose, the most significant of all. It is the thirteenth MS now at Zurich, known as the Jung Codex, and comprising writings of wholly Valentinian authorship.⁽⁴⁾ It was introduced to the library at Chenoboskion much later, probably from outside, and in relation to the total collection represents a so-called "erratic bloc".⁽⁵⁾ The Gospel of Truth,⁽⁶⁾ mentioned by Irenaeus, is the second section of this document, the place and date of which have been fixed at Rome, about 135-160 A.D.⁽⁷⁾

(1) Op.cit., p. 25.

(2) Op.cit., p. 22. (In the Egyptian museum at Berlin.)

(3) Op.cit., p. 26.

(4) Jung Codex, p. 25. The rest of the collection is mainly the product of a much more debased type of Gnosticism.

(5) Op.cit., p. 26.

(6) In which, remarks van Unnik, we are able "to see a Gnostic at work, and to observe the formation of his 'jargon'". (Jung Codex, p. 125.)

(7) The place is inferred from internal evidence; the date from the fact that Valentinus was at Rome between 155 and 160 A.D. (cf. Haer., III:IV; 265(1)), and from the first Christian attack on Gnosticism, Justin's Syntagma, now lost. The Gospel of Truth also seems to antedate the anathema pronounced on Marcion. (Jung Codex, pp. 91, 97 and cf. p. 125f.)

The indications are that this Gospel of Truth aimed at having itself incorporated into the canon of the New Testament as a fifth and final Gospel;⁽¹⁾ but there is nothing polemical in the conjectured aim, or in the choice of title, it appears. The emphasis is not so much on the word, "Gospel", with a view to setting it over against the Gospels already in the canon, as on the words "of Truth", in order to distinguish ἀ-λήθεια (signifying knowledge) from λήθη (forgetfulness of the Father) which is for Gnosticism the origin of sin. Not words and thoughts concern the writer, but the method whereby God has abolished the ἄνοια in which human sinfulness consists.⁽²⁾

The content of the document is more revealing still, for it contains no trace of certain characteristics we have come to regard and expect as invariable concomitants of Gnostic teaching, on the basis of the fragmentary sources hitherto available. No distinction is here made between the Supreme God and the Demiurge. The former is not unknown, or unknowable, but known no longer, or forgotten. There is no enumeration of the Aeons,⁽³⁾ (Nous, Ennoia, Sophia, etc.), and the latter are within, not outside the Godhead, as in later Gnosticism. Docetic ideas are not stressed, and the chief points of attack for later Christian writers do not appear at all. The document, in short, is

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- (1) Johannes Kreyenbuhl attempted to show that the Valentinian Gospel of Truth was identical with the canonical Gospel of John which, he maintained, was written by a Gnostic. (Vide his *Das Evangelium der Wahrheit*); but at the time when he gave out his opinions, only the title of the Gospel of Truth was known, and, as Quispel points out, while the latter borrowed "more than a little from St. John", it differed from it both in content and in spirit. (Jung Codex, pp. 49-50.) The early date of the Fourth Gospel is one vital hypothesis that emerges out of this discussion.
- (2) Jung Codex, pp. 104-105.
- (3) Hence the 'primal sin' is not the fall of Sophia but the forgetting or not knowing referred to (Jung Codex, p. 98).

Gnostic, but its Gnosticism is not conspicuous.⁽¹⁾ All this is taken to indicate that Valentinus may have written the original as early as 140, before he broke with the Great Church, may in fact presuppose a stage in Valentinianism even prior to the latter as represented by Irenaeus in the *Adversus Haereses*.⁽²⁾

There is moreover something actually like a positive similarity to New Testament ideas, at least, it can be shown that certain Greek words, only associated hitherto with Gnostic jargon, are not substantially different from the same Greek words as employed in our New Testament.⁽³⁾ There are also affinities with the Pauline mysticism of Death and Life and Resurrection-life in Christ. The Codex is in this respect even more Pauline than the orthodox writers of the second century.⁽⁴⁾ Indeed, the possible conclusion to which such considerations seem to point is that Valentinus wrote the document (c. 140-145) while he was still in the catholic Church, or just about to break with it,⁽⁵⁾ that is to say, while his teaching was still considered orthodox, and before it cut free to run riot in the sect-infested Roman world. At this stage it was largely under the influence of New Testament terminology,⁽⁶⁾ if our reconstruction is correct. This earliest Gnosticism within Christianity may have taken from the latter certain themes which it simply developed, elaborated, or strongly

(1) "The writer is interested solely in Christ, Who is the discovery and revelation of Truth, and in the salvation which has been thus achieved". (Op.cit., p. 53.)

(2) Op.cit., pp. 98-100, 53.

(3): (4) Op.cit., pp. 102-103, 110.

(4) Op.cit., p. 104.

(5) Op.cit., p. 125.

emphasized.⁽¹⁾ The rudimentary emphases are there still in the New Testament for those who care to seek them out, and Valentinus in the beginning may have been guilty of no greater sin in doing this (if in actual fact he did) than others have been since, in choosing certain foci in the Gospel or the Bible and elaborating them into no less rationalized theologies. Unnik, in fact, considers that in attacks made up till recently on Gnosticism the large place given and the significance attached to knowledge, for example in the Old Testament, apart from the New Testament altogether, have been almost quite forgotten in the course of the argument.⁽²⁾

In the Treatise on the Three Natures, the fourth section of our Codex (most probably by Heracleon, the Italian Gnostic), we find, again, the idea of history as an educative process of which Irenaeus makes so much.⁽³⁾ Further, the mystical conception of the unknown God has become much more personalized.⁽⁴⁾ The writer has little interest in Greek philosophy, in fact, stands consciously apart from it, a fact of which the followers of Overbeck and Harnack would require to take

(1) Jung Codex, p. 125. Cf. what W.D. Niven says in his Conflicts of the Early Church, pp. 161-162. Before the appearance of Christianity Gnosticism was vague and unstable. Christianity afforded it a point round which the vague Gnostic movements could crystallize and attain a measure of permanence..."There is, for example, much in the New Testament that seemed to be precisely what the Gnostics held - the world lay in wickedness; the flesh was to be mortified; there was a law in the members warring against the Spirit and so on ...in such teaching Gnosticism found points of attachment to Christianity, and attempted to shelter within the Church. Or, to vary the figure, growing from distinct roots of its own, it twined itself about the stem of the Christian tree like a parasite."

(2) Jung Codex, p. 104, footnote 1.

(3) Op.cit., p. 61. The Heracleon in question is regarded as the precursor of Origen.

(4) Op.cit., pp. 58-60. The Treatise in question is directed in particular against the main tenet of the Essene (and of every Gnostic sect) that God is the author of good and evil.

account.

We cannot go into all the detailed and closely-argued sifting of the evidence for the next main point to arise. Suffice it to say that, in the view of Puech, Quispel and van Unik, we are confronted here with an original pre-Gnosis, an ur-gnosticismus,⁽¹⁾ so to speak. Is there, asks Quispel, any connection between Jewish heterodoxy, heretical Gnosis, and the orthodox gnosis of the Alexandrians in the second century? This may, he warns us, prove the death-knell of Bultmann's hypothesis of a pre-Christian Gnostic redeemer, and of Harnack's basic thesis that early Catholicism was the Hellenization of primitive Christianity.⁽²⁾ The prospect conjured up by searching questions of this nature is both challenging and intriguing, but till the final editing of the Nag Hammadi MSS must to a large extent remain hypothetical.⁽³⁾ The author of the hypotheses put forward comes, nevertheless, to something much more like a firm conclusion when he says (summing up the results of the enquiry, so far as it has gone) that there seem to be good grounds for supposing that the redemption/redeemer ideas were taken over by Gnosis from Christianity. "A pre-Christian redeemer and an Iranian mystery of Redemption perhaps never existed." So far as Gnosis is pre-Christian, on this theory, it goes back to heterodox Jewish ideas about Adam, for example, and the Name, and to pre-Asiatic syncretism in general. Gnosis in origin is "Jewish-Near-Eastern occultism, Oriental mysticism".⁽⁴⁾

(1) Vide Jung Codex, p. 84.

(2) Vide Jung Codex, pp. 38-39.

(3) Op.cit., p. 62. The documents may yet throw light on European cultural history (e.g. German idealism), (Jung Codex, p. 38, etc.). The heretical Gnosis is better seen here in its true character as one of the great now largely forgotten world religions.

(4) Op.cit., p. 78.

The transition from primitive Christianity to early Catholicism is well set forth in the picture of late antiquity as three streams consisting of Greek philosophy, Christianity and Gnosticism flowing on side by side. In face of the pagan religious renaissance which occurred in the second and third centuries, Christianity had to present its credentials and defend its character. It was, in some sense, influenced by environmental factors.⁽¹⁾ That is accepted as the law of growth; but Quispel's conclusion seems to do greater justice to the facts with more facts to work on than the opposing school of thought has ever had at its command.

What light, then, do these reflections cast on our immediate task? One fact of prime importance has emerged at any rate. All the phenomena grouped together for convenience under the generic name of Gnosticism are far from being substantially or absolutely identical with Greek philosophy, as classically conceived. Gnosticism is not equivalent, in fact, to Greek philosophy, nor is the latter in the same category as the Church's orthodox theology. The germ and justification of a Christian gnosis is discoverable already in the writings of St. Paul, but gnosis of this type and Gnosticism are not interchangeable terms. It is conceivable that men like Valentinus were the heirs of Paul's justifiable demand for a more intelligent, if not more intellectual grasp of the teaching of the Lord. Be that as it may, the new facts make one thing plain, namely, that the degeneration of legitimate Christian gnosis into Gnostic heresy resulted from its being mingled unrestrictedly with the Jewish-Asiatic, pre-Christian syncretism that characterized the age. No doubt, in Neo-Platonism which Augustine

(1) Dogmen., ii, p. 236.

later on contributed to making respectable, the process Harnack has in mind began seriously to take shape; but even the latter makes admissions which on the face of them seem half-contradictory, but are, one hopes, intended to be half-conciliatory. Irenaeus, he says, sketched for Christianity "its fundamental idea, by combining the ancient notion of salvation with New Testament (Pauline) thoughts."⁽¹⁾ His ideas about redemption which are optimistic link him too with Paul and the Apologists. He makes good the defects of the latter theologically, surpasses Gnostic Christology, and exploits the Christological teaching of certain New Testament documents.⁽²⁾ He replaced "the vanishing trust in the possibility of attaining the highest knowledge by the aid of reason" with "the sure hope of a supernatural transformation of human nature" appropriating what is above reason.⁽³⁾ The traditional historical utterances respecting Christ and the whole prior course of history are given a sound basis and definite aim...and morality is balanced by religion. His recapitulation-theory is based on simple essentially Biblical ideas.⁽⁴⁾ Dogmatics is for him a way of looking at history, the history of salvation which is Revelation, God's saving ways that lead up through historic happenings to the appointed goal;⁽⁵⁾ "it was not in his power to stop the development destined to transform the faith into knowledge of a theological system".⁽⁶⁾

Harnack's basic position remains reasonable enough provided one

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- (1) Dogmen, ii, p. 236.
 - (2) Dogmen, pp. 238-239.
 - (3) Op.cit., p. 240.
 - (4) Op.cit., p. 243.
 - (5) Op.cit., p. 244.
 - (6) Op.cit., p. 216.

is willing to regard reason as the arch-enemy of faith, creative of the gulf, as another writer sees it, between the simple question, "Do you believe in Christ?", reminiscent of a much purer era of belief and the sophisticated version, "Do you believe thus and thus concerning Christ?"⁽¹⁾ But is the gulf so very great? What does "Jesus Christ" connote? What is "belief in" Jesus Christ? The basic meaning of "the Gospel" and its ultimate assumptions hang by that slender thread alone.

Even in Jesus' lifetime the issue was never actually so simple as all that. His direct questions to the Twelve at Caesarea Philippi, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?"... "But who say ye that I am?"⁽²⁾ are more than a challenge to their simple, childlike faith; they rather signify His desire to ascertain whether the faith they did confess embraced the substance, and not just the external semblance of the reality on which His claims were based, and their first, surprised efforts at an answer indicate how extremely vague and precarious such simple faith can often be. It is Peter's more profound confession that is hailed as the true and the impregnable foundation of the Church. Much more is demanded of the Christian today when more complex problems and more complicated situations keep impinging on his faith, and on the Faith. God is not less but more exalted when we offer Him in life and worship not only the joy of loving hearts but the firstfruits of honest thoughts.

The relative inadequacy of blind belief is vividly enough illustrated, even before Church History, as we think of it, began. (The

(1) W.D. Niven, *The Conflicts of the Early Church*, p. 168.

(2) Matt., XVI:13-20.

faith of the disciples, faced with the death of Jesus as a fait accompli, broke down utterly. It was, as John seems concerned to impress upon us, by his lovely story of the Emmaeus Road, deeper reflection on the meaning of events that brought to birth the faith which overcomes, and for them, in fact, afterwards did overcome the world. This was not, of course, the Faith which an intellectualizing process was to produce in days to come, nor was it disassociated from the fellowship of the resurrected Lord. It is a different thing, however, from the "Only believe" mentality which some Christians assume all too readily to be the Alpha and Omega of true Christianity.

The fact should never be lost sight of that for Irenaeus the Faith he contends for and about which he is so concerned is closer than we may fully realize to the faith that springs from a sense of personal belonging to the loved and living Lord. His own strong attachment to tradition has in the course of this part of our investigation been very rightly emphasized. The "deposit" is dear to him not as a mathematical formula might be to an atomic physicist, but as the bond that binds him in the communion of the saints to the Jesus of history, yet, on the other hand, his defence of the Tradition against those who impugned its authority or challenged its historicity is more than mere slavish repetition of the great names of the past. He gives a reason for the faith that is in him, as well as in the holy, catholic Church. He rationalizes his beliefs, if we may employ that much-used word in its basic significance.⁽¹⁾

(1) Harnack substantiates the point we have been trying to make. Irenaeus, he writes, "did not merely confine himself to describing the fact of redemption, its content and its consequences; but he also attempted to explain the peculiar nature of this redemption from /

For him, too, as for Abelard in later days, the Gospel is in a sense the rehabilitation of the moral law,⁽¹⁾ for he recognizes within

(1) continued from previous page:

from the essence of God and the incapacity of man, thus solving the question *cur deus homo* in the highest sense". (Dogmen., ii, p. 289.)

A good example of what might, in fact, be called the rationalizing or philosophizing bent in Irenaeus is to be found at Haer., II:XIII; 155(i), where, speaking of the thoughts of God as not being the thoughts of men, he says, "He (God) is a simple, uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like and equal to Himself, since He is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light, and the whole source of all that is good - even as the religious and pious are wont to speak concerning God." Again in Haer., II:III; 124-125(i) he tells us that "...as soon as God formed a conception in His mind, that was also done which He had thus mentally conceived"....and..."if it was formed such as it really is, then, He made it such Who had as such mentally conceived of it." Cf. also Haer., II:IV; 126(i) where a related idea is developed on similar rational lines, also Haer., II:VII; 136(i), II:VIII; 140-141(i), II:XVII; 173(i), IV:XXXVII; 39-40(ii), V:III; 63(ii) and V:IV; 65(ii). "I have now plainly shown," he says, in Haer., II:XIII; 158(i), "that the first production...of the intelligence they (the Gnostics) speak of as an untenable and impossible opinion."

Much of this sort of thing is of the type of ratiocination found in a document like the Westminster Confession of Faith, but it is a fair way ahead of the mere Biblicalism sometimes ascribed to Irenaeus.

There is also a good deal of polemical argumentation falling into a slightly different category, but, here, too, Irenaeus demonstrates that the answer to his critics is not just chapter and verse of Scripture or simply quoting authorities. For examples, vide Haer., II:XI; 147(i), II:XXX; 235(i), III:XI; 288(i), especially section I of the latter at the end.

(1) The breath of God at creation manifested man "as a being endowed with reason". (Haer., V:I; 58(ii).) It is this that makes him like God and endows him with free-will. He is also thus "the cause to himself, that sometimes he becomes wheat and sometimes chaff". He is responsible for his fall and deserving of judgment, because "having been created a rational being", but losing "the true rationality", he lived irrationally, opposing the righteousness of God. (Haer., IV:IV; 385(i).)

Yet, the living man is the glory of God, in Irenaeus' view, and natural morality is implanted in him, as such. Cf. Haer., IV:XX; 441-442(i), "...the prophets, the Lord Himself, the apostles and the Church teach no more than what must be already plain to the natural consciousness".

limits the validity of natural theology;⁽¹⁾ and, as we have deduced already, from some of his sentiments on the subject, he is deeply convinced of the ultimate reasonableness⁽²⁾ of things, and, therefore, in strict logic accepts the place of reason and of reasoning⁽³⁾ in the broad context of an enlightened Christianity. For him, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is both reason and belief,⁽⁴⁾ a fundamental

- (1) God at first wanned the Jews "by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning he had implanted in mankind". (Haer., IV:XV; 419(i).) Those who preceded Abraham and Moses were justified "without the Law of Moses" and "had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls...they had in themselves the righteousness of the Law". (Haer., IV:XVI; 423(i).) The manna in the wilderness was "rationalem escam". (Haer., IV:XVI; 424(i).) God "has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all". (Haer., IV:XVI; 425(i).)

Harnack asserts that the first of Irenaeus' ideas of "all-dominating importance", namely, that the Creator of the world and the supreme God are one and the same, is tantamount to "the unity of nature, morality, and revelation". (Dogmen., ii, p. 237.)

In this connection it is well to remember that Gnosticism would have abolished natural revelation altogether. If the latter is inadmissible, we are thrown back once more on the very problem which the Gnostics were so exercised about, viz., the relation of God to the visible world, the natural and the supernatural, reason and revelation, philosophy and faith. The early Church expressed its disagreement by asserting (a) the goodness of all created things and (b) the imago dei. The most uncompromising statement of this general position is Irenaeus' chiliastic teachings, obviously as an offset to the Gnostic assertion that the creation was the Fall.

- (2) This is inherent in the divine reason, and in man, God's chief creation; it must, therefore, be inherent in all else that God has made.
- (3) The Imago Dei is, for Irenaeus, the equivalent of humanum (reason, freedom, speech, etc.). Vide Lawson, op.cit., p. 205.
- (4) Harnack says in Dogmen., ii, p. 246, footnote 1, that faith and theological knowledge seem from some passages in Irenaeus to represent the "is" and the "why", but thinks that Irenaeus cannot maintain the relationship, "for faith itself", he adds, "must also to some extent include a knowledge of the reason and aim of God's ways of salvation. Faith and theological knowledge are, therefore, after all closely interwoven with each other". On the basis of this one admission, one wonders why Harnack has made such an ado over the effect (unfavourable, he assumes) of theology on faith.

Bonwetsch (Theologie d. I, p. 139, quoted by Lawson, p. 247) thinks that "faith", for Irenaeus, "is often...the content of the Christian Creed, and naturally also the acknowledgment of the truth preached by the Church", but that it is also for him "according to its proper essence the surrender of the heart to God".

emphasis which must appeal to many minds in every age, for man is not all reason, nor yet is he all belief; nor can he be an inner dualism of reason and belief. Faith is in fact the foundation on which reasoning is built. It is faith ultimately in the rationality of the world that evokes response, whether rational or volitional, in man.

If Harnack's contention is the fixed and final truth, Paul's preaching was in vain. The task laid on the latter in the proclamation of his message was largely the elaboration of the primitive deposit to bring it relevantly into redemptive relationship with a multiform and multi-racial society, differing in so many ways from the environment in which the Gospel was first preached. His classic attempt at Athens may have failed, but the attempt had to be made. He may have resolved to know nothing there and thereafter except Christ and Him crucified, but it would not appear that he allowed himself to be strictly ruled on all subsequent occasions by the resolution he had made. He was the first to grasp the real significance of the problem of communication in the atmosphere of tension set up between the secular world and Christianity. Irenaeus recognized it also and as clearly sensed what was at stake. He could hardly have believed literally in deification as the actual consummation of conversion to faith in Christ, but through no other media could his learned contemporaries in the Hellenistic world conceive of the goal of the Christian life. There were no better, indeed, no alternative terms of reference at hand for adequate conveyance of the meaning of the benefits of Christ. The heathen rituals offered similar benefits to their initiates in symbol and mystery; the Church offered men no less, but she was making her offer (and this is the vital difference), ultimately, in sincerity, in

reality and in truth. Such willingness to accommodate the non-Christian in external form or terminology, need not be equated with identity of content or idea.

The most outstanding feature of the early Christian Church was its intransigence, its intolerance of every other faith, its single-minded claim to sole and unique possession of the truth.⁽¹⁾ This, first and last, was the casus belli between Irenaeus and the heretics, and whatever of the latter's point of view he may have adapted or utilized could not have been, we feel sure, either so serious or so extensive as to enter "into the substance of the Faith".

(1) The fierceness with which Christians criticised all that savoured of heathenism argues strongly against their deliberately adopting any element of heathenism at all. So Niven tells us in one place; yet in another he declares that the Church emerged out of the conflict (with Gnosticism) "with a profound change of emphasis". (The Conflicts of the Early Church, pp. 141, 168.) But, Crutwell says, per contra, "None of the great writers" (of the period) "even while expatiating in the realms of transcendental theology or of man's free-will, ever willingly adopts any conclusion which he believes to be inconsistent with this Catholic tradition." (Op.cit., i, p. 286.) Rainy agrees, "The Christianity which lived in the churches," he has written, "was felt by all earnest Christians to have a definite character which must be maintained." There was for the body of believers an unfailing sense of what this character should be, like immediate awareness of the "difference between food and poison. So when eccentric teachers inculcated views which threatened to transform Christianity, to alter, as it were, its centre of gravity, or to pivot it on some new axis, resistance was instinctive". (The Ancient Catholic Church, p. 95.)

I I I

TERTULLIAN OF CARTHAGE

" A single floweret from the hedgerow, I say not from the meadows; a single little shell-fish from any sea, I say not the Red Sea; a single stray feather of a moor-fowl, I say nothing of the peacock will, I presume, prove to you that the Creator was but a sorry Artificer... What of sky and earth and sea? You will not scorn its Creator, if I offer you a rose."

Adv. Marc., I: XIII; 24

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I. TERTULLIAN'S PRE-CHRISTIAN LIFE AND GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

(A) Birth and Upbringing

Our eyes turn now toward Carthage. The city, linked historically with the Tyre of the Old Testament,⁽¹⁾ had, after numerous vicissitudes of fortune, been refounded as a Roman colony in 29 B.C. Here, by the beginning of the second century, were all the institutions of a highly-developed way of life, a world-famous culture, celebrated schools and a centre of Latin literature;⁽²⁾ and here, as seems probable, amongst the immigrant population that comprised the colony, Tertullian was born about the middle of the second century.

As to his social status⁽³⁾ there is no absolute certainty. That his father was a centurion⁽⁴⁾ may very well be true. There is, at any rate, a tradition to that effect; but otherwise we know nothing of his parentage, and at best can only reconstruct how he may have been brought up, from scattered hints in his own writings⁽⁵⁾ and from the known usages of the age. His whole life, up to the point of his conversion, was, presumably, conditioned in its every aspect by the customs and conceptions of the ancient pagan world, and he would receive the usual thoroughgoing education in both Latin and in Greek.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Vide Hastings, D.B., iv, p. 823, col. I.

(2) Mommsen, Provinces, ii, p. 343.

(3) The type of education he received seems to indicate a privileged position in Roman society. Neander says of him, "Though belonging to the higher ranks of Society, he must have received a good literary education..." (Antignostikus, p. 202; italics mine.)

(4) Carthage was the only city of the West, apart from Lugdunum, "which besides the capital of the empire, had a standing garrison of imperial troops". (Mommsen, op.cit., p. 332.)

(5) cf. the Ad Nationes passim.

(6) Marrou informs us that the children of good Roman families were practically brought up to be educated Greeks (A History of Education in /

(B) Choice of a Career

This classical curriculum almost inevitably led to a legal career for which the appropriate equipment was considered to be of a predominantly literary type. Young Romans in the school-room compared Homer with Vergil and Cicero with Demosthenes as a required preliminary to the study of rhetoric.⁽¹⁾ The Roman Law-school, marking the irrevocable break with Greek conventions is, in fact, the origin of Latin Higher Education.⁽²⁾ Further elements of Greek culture were at

(6) continued from previous page:

in Antiquity, pp. 96, 249f. and passim); but at the same time a parallel course of Latin study was provided which, till the middle of the 3rd century B.C., was modelled on Greek poetic literature. We find the first indication of the coming transition in the use of Andronicus' translation of the Odyssey and Ennius as school-texts for expounding the Greek authors. Menander is in vogue as well, but Homer rules supreme. Even though the students wrote in Latin they did their studying in Greek. (Marrou, op.cit., p. 254.)

The system was gradually taken over by the grammatici Latini till the Augustan period, when the outlines of Latin secondary education begin to take definite shape. Horace and Terence are included now, but Vergil occupies the central place, later shared with Cicero, the father of Latin rhetoric, aesthetics and history, who, according to Marrou, summed up along with Vergil the whole of Latin culture (op.cit., p. 278). Terence and Sallust, Horace and Cicero comprise the so-called 'quadrivia', the recognized basis of a liberal education (Marrou, op.cit.). Being education signified henceforth for a Latin knowing Vergil and Cicero. This was 'humanitas' whose realization was supposed to be the expression of the true nature of man and the supreme ideal of life.

Tertullian is the typical product of this dual curriculum, his literary erudition is extensive, and quotations from the 'classics', as he knew them, flow freely from his pen. (vide passim the Index Rerum to Oehler's edition of his works containing references to close on a hundred Greek and Latin authors). "If," as Turner remarks, "Minucius Felix resembles Cicero, Tertullian may be described as the Tacitus of Christian Latinity." (The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 431.)

- (1) The rhetor Latinus, a highly-skilled specialist, imparted to his pupils the complex apparatus of the traditional oratory dating back to the Greek Sophists. One simply learned the rules by heart, and then acquired practice in the nimble use of them, without much serious concern for truth or factuality, as we are expected to think of them today. (Vide Gwynn, Roman Education from Cicero to Quintillian, pp. 159, 170-171.)
- (2) The eclipse of Greek by Latin is reflected in the adoption of the latter as the language of liturgy and theology by the Church communities first in Africa, then in Italy by the end of the second century. (Marrou, op.cit., p. 261.)

this stage introduced, Aristotelian logic and the morality of the Stoics, for example, being added to the ingredients derived already from Hellenistic life and thought. Philosophy, literature and rhetoric headed the final list, but the greatest of these was rhetoric.⁽¹⁾

The Stoic philosophy with its strong appeal to the practical Roman temperament had, by this time, been widely popularized by Cicero⁽²⁾ and Seneca,⁽³⁾ very much modified, of course, by the incorporation of ideas from other schools,⁽⁴⁾ and increasingly "spiritualized". Stoic tenets were recognized as part of State-legislation by Marcus Aurelius and "the great jurists^{-sts} of the second and third centuries emphasized the importance of Stoic principles". This enables us to understand Tertullian's predisposition to some sort of law career,⁽⁵⁾ and the enduring influence which Stoic ideas could not have failed to exert both on his ideas and his outlook in general. That they formed a part of his intellectual make-up is all that we need note here.

(1) Gwynn, op.cit., p. 153f., 173-179; and Marrou, op.cit., p. 252.

(2):(3) The philosophic writings of the former had as their object the creation of a technical Latin language for the popularization of Greek thought. It was because of this that he was esteemed so highly by the Early Fathers of the Church, and may have been admitted to the correspondence of St. Paul.

There had been hitherto no native school of philosophers, though there was philosophy at Rome (Pythagoreanism, to begin with, then Epicureanism, prior to Stoicism and, finally, Neo-platonism). With Cicero the way was opened up for Latin philosophers to come into their own. Philosophy, incidentally, was the last of the learned disciplines to move away from direct Greek influence.

(4) The metaphysical in Greek philosophy, for example, taken over from Platonism by the Stoics who had no metaphysics of their own.

(5) Lietzmann notes that the name, Tertullian, occurs in the contemporary Digests of the corpus juris. (The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 219.) Turner alludes to his "precise legal mind", (The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 352) and Harnack selects for special mention his masterly power of framing formulae (Dogmen., ii, pp. 257f.). Cf. Quasten, Patrology, ii, p. 322, where instances are given of Tertullian's legal terminology. The outstanding example is, of course, the De Praescriptione.

II. EVIDENCES OF HIS INDEBTEDNESS TO GRAECO-ROMAN CULTURE

(A) Echoes of Hellenism

Tertullian, it is evident, never lost touch with his intellectual past. His mantle, as he tells us, may have been finally adopted into the fellowship of faith, but here and there the original material has a tendency to show through. He sings the new song, but the old strains can, not infrequently, be heard.

He holds, for instance, that "All sin is...irrational",⁽¹⁾ a characteristically Greek idea, and that the world is in a sense a prison-house, a thought with which he would reconcile the martyrs to their imprisonment.⁽²⁾ He likens the animal spirit to "the body's charioteer",⁽³⁾ a reminiscence of Platonism, admits the use of allegorical interpretation,⁽⁴⁾ assimilates terms employed by technical philosophy,⁽⁵⁾ and reasons like a philosopher.⁽⁶⁾ The chief strain of

(1) De An., XVI; 443(ii).

(2) Ad Mart., I; 2(i).

(3) De An., LIII; 527(ii).

(4) e.g. De Res. Car., XXVII; 262(ii). To this class belong a number of incorporated "gnosticisms", for instance, his use of the term προβολή which, he fears, may arouse antagonism as savouring of gnosis; but, he adds, "Truth must not...refrain from the use of such a term, and its reality and meaning, because heresy also employs it." (Adv. Prax., VIII; 346-347(ii).) He even leans to the conception of the divine impassibility. (Adv. Prax., XXIX; 403(ii) and XXX; 404(ii).)

(5) The term 'substantia' and its derivatives, for instance.

(6) God, he argues, is one; otherwise he does not exist, "because we more properly believe that that has no existence which is not as it ought to be". (Adv. Marc., I:III; 5.) He prefaces his remarks by saying that "the Christian verity has distinctly declared this principle", but he prefers to find the proof of it in a philosophical assumption and a strictly logical process. Or again, as he puts it, reason expressly forbids belief in more gods than one, for, by definition, "God must be a Being to which, as the great Supreme, nothing is equal." That Being to which nothing is equal must, moreover, /

Hellenic influence is discernible, however, in his teaching regarding God's unity and the goodness of creation. "None other than the Creator and Sustainer of both man and the universe can be acknowledged as Father and Lord."⁽¹⁾ He goes on from there, though, to describe the latter as the "great Supreme (Summum magnum) in form and in reason and in might and in power",⁽²⁾ Who is sovereign over all the laws of nature,⁽³⁾ and Who is almighty because all things are His own.⁽⁴⁾ There is "nothing in the dispensation of God" which "is found to be mean and ignoble and contemptible",⁽⁵⁾ for "what is divine, and not reasonable, not good?"⁽⁶⁾ A finely-written passage in the *Adversus Marcionem* represents Tertullian's ontological argument. "Imitate, if you can," he says, "the cells of the bee, the hills of the ant, the webs of the spider and the threads of the silk-worm; endure, too, if you know how, those very creatures which invest your couch and house, the poisonous injections of the blister-beetle, the spikes of the fly, and the gnat's sheath and

(6) continued from previous page:

moreover, be unique. Therefore, God, he concludes, almost Q.E.D. style, is one. (*Adv. Marc.*, I:V; 9.) Or, again, in *Adv. Prax.*, XXVI; 394(ii), he speaks of attributes as not being substances, but "the accidents of the particular substance", which might be a statement right out of T.H. Bradley, and in *De Spect.*, 3:12(i) he talks of reasoning from species to genus and vice versa!

(1) *Adv. Marc.*, V:V; 391.

(2) *Op.cit.*, I:III; 5 and cf. I:VII; 12. "...I must needs use a name to express the essence, of which indeed that Being consists Who is called God, and Who is accounted the great Supreme because of His essence, not from His name."

(3) *De Res. Car.*, LVIII; 324(ii). This includes "plagues" as well as "kindly providences". (*Adv. Marc.*, V:XXVI; 455.) Shortt says that, for Tertullian, Nature is the original authority side by side with the word of God (*op.cit.*, p. 41), but Tertullian himself does not say so. He admits the place of natural revelation but takes this to be God's mode of communication with mankind "afar off"..."not as those who have been brought nigh to Him". (*De Spect.*, 2:9(i).)

(4) *Adv. Marc.*, II:V; 70.

(5) *Adv. Marc.*, V:V; 394.

(6) *De Fuga*, 4:361(i).

and sting... Finally, take a turn round your own self, survey man inside and out. Even this handiwork of our God will please you, inasmuch as your own lord, that better god, loved it so well..."(1)

It follows that nothing at all happens without the will of God.(2) The shaking and the shielding of faith both belong alike to Him.(3) This line of reasoning leads Tertullian into the thick of the most formidable problem ever posed for the mind of man, the problem of evil and of human suffering but he does not hesitate. He plunges into it and makes his way confidently through to what appears to him the apparently satisfactory solution. If the world is evil, as the Gnostics argue, man eats, drinks and inhales evil(4) which, of course, he will not accept. God's justice is displayed in the divine plan of creation, as one may discern from the things which He has made.(5) Even the Gnostics who profess the opposite belie themselves in depending for their livelihood on the stars which God fashioned, and they must, therefore, consider good.(6) There is a diversity in things,(7) but there is, at the same time, a unity in the midst of this diversity, the one supreme God being the Author(8) of it all. Thus, we are led to

- (1) Adv. Marc., I:XIV; 25. Man is regarded here as the crown of an altogether good creation. The thrust at the Gnostics is directed against their belief that the lower god, the Creator of the Old Testament, was responsible for the material (evil) world "from which they claimed to have escaped". cf. Adv. Marc., I:XXIV; 47.
- (2) Including martyrdoms (De Fuga, I; 356(i)).
- (3) De Fuga, 2:359(i).
- (4) Adv. Marc., I:XIV; 26.
- (5) Op.cit., II:XII.
- (6) Op.cit., I:XVIII; 32. The reference is to the Gnostics' use of astrology in their prognostications.
- (7) Of things, for instance, corporeal and incorporeal. (Adv. Marc., I:XVI; 29.)
- (8) In man, for example, who is body and soul, yet whose salvation is a body/soul concern. It is because of this that the Christian can anticipate the redemption of the body and the soul. (Adv. Marc., I: /

the conclusion that, everything considered, nothing evil comes from God. Evil is ultimately chargeable to the liberty of man, or the freedom of human wills.⁽¹⁾ That may be well enough, someone objects, regarding evil but what of evil things which are known commonly to exist? God made these, says Tertullian, but not of His own will and pleasure which would have been unfitting and unworthy of Himself.⁽²⁾ The fault really lies in matter which may, admittedly, be very evil. Notwithstanding, good things are created out of it. But the questioner is not yet satisfied. "What of the text," he asks, "'It is I Who create evil?'"⁽³⁾ Two kinds of evil, Tertullian explains, are involved here, viz., (a) Mala culpae - evils of sin, and (b) Mala poenae - penal evils. The devil is author of (a) and God is the author of (b). The former are morally bad. The latter, resulting from the operation of divine justice on human sin, may seem evil to those who suffer them, but are not really so per se, since they are remedially and providentially arranged.⁽⁴⁾ Well, then, reiterates the questioner, what of evil in its larger, cosmic sense? The two kinds, replies Tertullian, come into it again. There is (A) the evil which supervenes on the soul from

(8) continued from previous Page:

I:XXIV; 46 where Tertullian uses the expression "this halving of salvation"; cf. op.cit., IV:XXXVII; 338 and I:XVI; 29-30, "...the whole of this creation of ours has been fashioned with a reciprocal rivalry among its several parts". This very diversity which is the theme of Marcion's "Antitheses" assumes what he attempts to prove, (Adv. Marc., II:XXIX; 116), and demonstrates the regulation of the universe by the over-ruling reason.

- (1) Adv. Marc., II:VI; 74. Sin is the consequence of that original schism which arose out of the first anti-rational action on the part of man in an otherwise good world.
- (2) Tertullian is a staunch believer in the universal fitness of things (vide Adv. Marc., II:XII; 84-85, II:XVII; 92; Adv. Herm., II; 58 (ii), XII; 72(ii)).
- (3) Is., XLV:7, quoted loosely.
- (4) Adv. Marc., II:XIV; 87.

the intervention of the evil spirit; and (B) a natural antecedent evil arising from its corrupt origin. Our nature is corrupted by "another nature having a god and a father of its own".⁽¹⁾ This, we need only comment, is all very interesting, but the problem is not solved.

The basic unity of reality⁽²⁾ is, nevertheless, maintained. Tertullian opposes "the dialectical experts calling in question the whole difference between things natural and supernatural... All things are natural or none are... For we believe that nature, if it is anything, is a reasonable work of God and for the Christian"...only that can receive a hearing which is suggested by contemplating God, the Author of all the things which we are now discussing.⁽³⁾ "Even the things we cannot see are God's to Whom belongs the universe we do see;⁽⁴⁾ and the Church's sacraments⁽⁵⁾ are the proof of its belief where such matters are concerned. In fact, the more closely God is connected with His creatures, the greater is His goodness⁽⁶⁾ as revealed in the Incarnation where the Son...has been seen, and heard, and encountered, the Witness and Servant of the Father, uniting in Himself man and God, God in mighty deeds, in weak ones man, in order that He may give to man as much as He takes from God."⁽⁷⁾ "What in your esteem," says Tertullian to the heretics, "is the entire disgrace of my God is, in fact, the sacrament of man's salvation. God held

(1) De An., XLI; 505(ii).

(2) This unity includes within itself the unity of human nature also.

(3) De An., XLIII; 508(ii).

(4) Adv. Marc., IV:XXV; 284.

(5) The material substance, subject to God in all His works, fulfils His behest in the Church's sacraments, the terrestrial ministering to the celestial. De Bapt., III; 234(i), the creatures employed in Baptism, the Eucharist, etc., are the so-called "beggarly elements" of the creation. (Adv. Marc., I:XIV; 25-26.)

(6) Adv. Marc., I:XVII; 31.

(7) Adv. Marc., II:XXVII; 113.

converse with man, that man might learn to act as God. God dealt on equal terms with man, that man might be able to deal on equal terms with God. God was found little that man might become very great."⁽¹⁾

(B) Contributions from Stoicism

The eclectic character of Stoicism in the second century must always be kept in mind in order to appreciate the depth and extent of its influence on a mind like Tertullian's. Traditionalism was the watchword of the later Stoics, yet neither in ethics nor cosmology did their views conform entirely to those of the older schools,⁽²⁾ the long-accepted tenets of their founders being more and more combined with ideas assimilated from other current philosophies.⁽³⁾

Tertullian belonged to this sort of thought-world and imbibed its mentality but, as has been pointed out, because he impressed a legal character on his teaching the mistake is often made of failing to recognize that he had been deeply influenced by the Greek philosophers, Platonists, Aristotelians and Stoics, the last-named most of all. He was singularly impressed, according to Shortt, by the teaching of Apuleius,⁽⁴⁾ philosopher and Platonist...and..."develops his syllogisms as an advocate versed in philosophy" (in which he was "the pioneer of his Church, whose theologians had always reasoned rather than

(1) Adv. Marc., II:XXVII; 113.

(2) This is a marked feature of all the post-Aristotelian schools.

(3) There were many things in the Platonism of the older Academy that appealed strongly to the Stoics, viz. the idea of virtue as knowledge, depreciation of external goods, abstinence from sensuality and high moral idealism. There were also the ideals of life according to Nature (or reason), self-sufficiency and the practical aspect of philosophy. Platonism and Stoicism tend more and more to follow a common channel, though they are still distinguishable and require to be distinguished for a proper understanding of the beginnings of Christian theology.

(4) Of Madaura (vide Mommsen, Provinces, ii, p. 341).

philosophized").⁽¹⁾ His writings on examination will yield ample evidence that he was quite prepared to borrow from any of the philosophical traditions which might provide grist for his mill, despite his avowed hatred and contempt for the philosophers themselves.

It is principally in his doctrine of God and the soul that he reveals such influence. "We are worshippers," he writes, "of one God, of whose existence and character nature teaches all men; at whose lightnings and thunders you tremble, whose benefits minister to your happiness,"⁽²⁾ Who "...has for His witnesses this whole being of ours, and this universe wherein we dwell." It is because He is thus known that He is "proved to be both God and the only One",⁽³⁾ and this is attested by the Scriptures.⁽⁴⁾ "Come, then," he expostulates with the Marcionites, "wind up your cavils against the most sacred and reverend works of nature."⁽⁵⁾ It is pointless even in matters of faith to expect men by the unaided light of reason to arrive at the knowledge of God, for even those who believe are dependent on "some token of the Deity in works worthy of God".⁽⁶⁾ It is in support of the basic unity for faith (as Tertullian conceives it) of natural evidences and reason that he maintains against the philosophers the unity (for him) of intellection and sense-perception.⁽⁷⁾ He holds to "the instinctive knowledge of natural objects", which "never fails, not even in the brute creation".⁽⁸⁾

(1) Shortt, op. cit., p. 17.

(2) Ad Scap., 2;46(i).

(3) Adv. Marc., I:X; 18.

(4) Adv. Marc., III:X; 139. The burning bush - the cloud and fiery pillar - the flesh of man.

(5) Adv. Marc., III:XI; 141.

(6) Adv. Marc., I:XII; 22.

(7) This cuts at the distinction between the wise and the unwise.

(8) De An., XXIV; 465(ii).

God "must first be known from nature, and afterwards authenticated by instruction; from nature by His works; by instruction, through his revealed announcements.⁽¹⁾ Nature, Scripture and Discipline combine to reinforce this witness. If Scripture founded the Law, then Nature corroborates, and Discipline enforces it. All these are ministers of God's purpose, and whatever is out of harmony with them can have no claim to be of God.⁽²⁾ Even the resurrection of the dead is testified to by "the whole...of this revolving order of things".⁽³⁾ "In His works did God write it, before He wrote it in the Scriptures; He proclaimed it in His mighty deeds earlier than in His inspired words. He first sent Nature to you as a teacher, meaning to send Prophecy also as a supplementary instructor...."⁽⁴⁾ which, adds Tertullian, is also necessary and conformable in every way to reason.⁽⁵⁾ And why? Because, he replies, God is Himself the Author of reason, which "in fact is a thing of God, inasmuch as there is nothing which God the Maker of all has not provided, disposed, ordained by reason"...whereby whatever He has willed, should be handled and understood.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Adv. Marc., I:XVIII; 32.

(2) De Virg. Vel., XVI; 178(iii).

(3) De Res. Carn., XII; 235(ii).

(4) De Res. Carn., XII; 235(ii). Tertullian explains the principle involved by saying that, if Scripture is uncertain, Nature is clear enough; and Scripture can be in no uncertainty regarding Nature's witness. If there is doubt concerning Nature, Discipline indicates what is more sanctioned by God. For the entire passage, vide De Virg. Vel., XVI; 178(iii).

(5) Op.cit., XIV; 237(ii).

(6) De Poen., I; 257(i). Tertullian could not be more of a Stoic than he strikes one as being here. Reason, he argues, will support tradition, and custom, and faith (De Cor., 4;337(i)). It is "the guiding principle in all interpretation" (De Praes. Haer., IX; 12 (ii)). Men have a part in God, and, therefore, in reason. Accordingly, they ought to reason things out (De Poen., II; 258(i)). "Reason is," in his epigrammatic way of putting it, "the rudder". (De Poen., I; 257(i).)

All goodness is rational even supposing it is righteousness above all that makes it so, and all God's properties are "as rational as they are natural". Tertullian affirms that he requires reason in God's goodness, "because nothing else can properly be accounted good than that which is rationally good".⁽¹⁾ Indeed, the perfection of God in all things derives from His eternity and His rationality.⁽²⁾ Now, the Greeks spoke of God as Λόγος, meaning "Word" which is the more popular usage, but the original meaning is reason, as it is also the more ancient. The term was used of the thought or the consciousness of God, signifying the rational nature, for "Reason was first in Him".⁽³⁾ As God is self-revealed in creation, it, too, is rational, and, from it, "the earnestness and truth of the good God...are...capable of proof".⁽⁴⁾

As God was revealed in nature from the beginning, and is rationally deducible from creation, so is He the source of the primordial law that governs the universe, and from which all other manifestations of the law of God derive. Tertullian has a meaningfully

(6) continued from previous page:

Turner is inclined to think that reason meant something more for Tertullian than mere human intellect, and cites De. Jej., X to illustrate. ("The Pattern of Christian Truth", p. 314, footnote 3.) To him, at any rate, the Creator and the God of righteousness are identical, for (a) God implanted in His creatures the natural "fear" of Himself, (b) gave man the Law and the Prophets which mark the age of human infancy, leading man on from there to (c) the Gospel, the exuberance of its youth, and finally to (d) the guidance of the Paraclete, the full maturity of the race. (cf. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian, pp. 222-223.)

(1) Adv. Marc., I:XXIII; 42.

(2) Op.cit., I:XXIV; 45. At I:XXIII; 44 Tertullian speaks of "rational benevolence" in man.

(3) Adv. Prax., V; 341(ii). The cosmic reason, as active creative principle in nature, is, according to Stoicism, the Λόγος ὑπερματῆρικός, the universal generative force, conceived originally as fire (cf. Adv. Marc., I:XIII; 23 and Adv. Prax., VI; 343(ii)).

(4) Adv. Marc., II;VII; 74.

condensed way of putting this. Within "this general and primordial law" (like the leaves and branches of the oak concealed at the embryo-stage in the acorn) are "enclosed all the precepts specially of the posterior Law, which germinated when disclosed at their proper times".⁽¹⁾ There was, before Moses, an unwritten law which was habitually understood in a natural way. The Mosaic law was being "re-formed for the better...answerably to the circumstances of the times...with a view to man's salvation".⁽²⁾ The law of nature always was an ally of the latter, and still is, inasmuch as it is opposed to luxury, grossness, uncleanness, and regulates marriage, thus supporting Christian customs,⁽³⁾ for nature is "the first rule of all" whose God, man's creator, is the God of the Christian.⁽⁴⁾

This divine law, engraven on "the natural tables" of the human heart and suggesting "both natural law and a law-revealing nature" is that which universally prevails for "Why should God, the Founder of the universe, the Governor of the whole world, the Fashioner of humanity, the Sower of universal nations, be believed to have given a law through Moses to one people and not...assigned it to all?" Unless He had so given it, all proselytizing would have been impossible. It was, on the contrary, in keeping with the goodness and equity of God that He should have given to all nations⁽⁵⁾ this same law, when, and through

(1) Adv.Jud., II; 204-205(iii), recalling the Aristotelian entelechy.

(2) Adv.Jud., II; 205-206(iii).

(3) Adv. Marc., V:XV; 449.

(4) De Cor., 5;338(i).

(5) Adv.Jud., II; 203(iii). cf. Adv. Marc., IV:XXXIV; 323. "It must therefore be evident to every man of intelligence who has ever heard of the Elysian fields, that there is some determined place called Abraham's bosom, and that it is designed for the reception of the souls of Abraham's children, even from among the Gentiles (since he is "the father of many nations" which must be classed amongst his family)..."cf. further De Car. Chr., XV; 197(ii). The only difference between the heathen and the heretics is that the latter professing belief, do not believe; the former believe, though not professed believers.

whom, and as He willed. Now, the function of the law, "imposed on man by Goodness is aimed at his happiness to ensure his freedom and his sovereignty over the other creatures, to render him fit to receive laws and ordinances, that he might, as a creature," capable of intelligence and knowledge, be restrained within the bounds of rational liberty, subject to Him Who had "subjected all things unto him".

Rationality implicit in the notion of law is for Stoicism and Tertullian alike the essential character of the soul which, according to Stoic teaching was the microcosm, a spark of the divine, a *λογος* of the universal *Λόγος*, a reflection of the World Soul or Cosmic Mind. The rational element is accordingly the soul's natural condition, impressed upon it from its very first creation⁽¹⁾ by its Author (who is himself essentially rational). The soul was before prophecy, and its dowry from the beginning was the (inborn) knowledge of God.⁽²⁾ It was part of the fitness of things that being furnished with such a soul at his creation man should be, in a unique sense, the rational animal.⁽³⁾ The testimony of the soul is thus one with that of nature and of reason. "The soul is the disciple of nature whose teacher is God, and one need only look within for "the secret deposit of an innate knowledge" of the divine.⁽⁴⁾ "O, noble testimony of the soul," exclaims Tertullian, "by

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- (1) The rational element, according to Tertullian, is the soul's naturally appropriate means of functioning as such (De An., XVI; 442(ii)), though rationality is not its only attribute. It possesses immortality, sensibility, and freedom of the will, all of which are its proper 'aliments'. (De An., XXXVIII; 502(ii).)
- (2) Adv. Marc., I:X; 18. This is declared to be one and the same "amongst the Egyptians, and the Syrians, and the tribes of Pontus. For their souls call the God of the Jews their God".
- (3) De Car. Chr., XII; 190(ii).
- (4) De Test. An., 5;43(i). cf. op.cit., 6;44(i), "and if you would have faith in God and in nature, have faith in the soul; thus you will believe yourself," and Apol., 787(i). Evidences of God are obtainable, either from the works of God's hands, "which both contain you and sustain you", or from the testimony of the soul itself.

nature Christian...(1) There is not a soul of man that does not, from the light that is in itself, proclaim the very things we are not permitted to speak above our breath..." But this is not intended as unqualified approval. "Thou proclaimedst God, O soul," counters Tertullian, "but thou didst not seek to know Him;...thou hadst a savour of Christianity and withal wert the persecutor of Christians."(2) There were potential Christians before Christ, and there are such Christians still, for there remains in the soul of man a portion of good, of that original divine and genuine goodness which is the soul's true nature. This God-derived element is not extinguished, just obscured. Obscured it may be, because it is not God. Extinguished it cannot be, because it comes from God...for "even in the worst there is something good, and something bad in the best".(3)

This is the presupposition of the Gospel and the divine scheme of salvation, as Tertullian thinks of them. He teaches, like his predecessors, the doctrine of the image dei, though he naturally impresses it with the brand of his own thought. There is in the soul of man originally both the "image" and "likeness" of God. The "image" (form), received first through the divine afflatus, is lost subsequently through sin. The "likeness" which is indestructible, and the earnest of man's eternal destiny,(4) is still made manifest in man's freedom and power of will(5) which Tertullian regards as "in a certain sense a natural

(1) Apol., 17:87(1) supra.

(2) De Test. An., 6:45(1).

(3) De An., XLI; 505(ii). "Wherever Stoicism prevailed in religious thought and feeling, as, for example, in Marcus Aurelius, religion gains currency as "natural" religion in the most comprehensive sense of the word. The idea of revelation or redemption scarcely emerges." Shortt, The Influence of Philosophy on the Mind of Tertullian, pp. 40-41.

(4) De Bapt., V; 238(1).

(5) Adv. Marc., II:V; 70.

attribute of goodness".⁽¹⁾ Within the Christian dispensation, Christ has become God's image for man, for, when God made man, the divine image in which He made him took form eventually in Christ. Now, the image of God was operative throughout human history. Christ, in the name of God the Father, from the beginning, held intercourse with men, communing with patriarchs and prophets,⁽²⁾ administering judgment all through the past, as he continues still to do.⁽³⁾ He was the Son of the Creator, and His Word, whom God emitted from His own self setting him over every dispensation and administration of His will.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, the Creator, Who is Law, Reason and World-soul, initiates at His coming in the form and flesh of man a process of recapitulation, so that Christ's appearing represents the renovation and illumination of man's nature. Jesus is the "Trainer" of the human race, the "Enlightener",⁽⁵⁾ the "Master" teaching men to escape death,⁽⁶⁾ the Good Physician⁽⁷⁾ who administers the blessed waters of baptism (which are "endued with medicinal virtue"),⁽⁸⁾ He is also the Good Shepherd, for the parable of

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- (1) Adv. Marc., II:VI; 72. "Even fallen as it is, the victim of the great adversary's machinations, it does not forget its Creator, His goodness and law, and the final end both of itself and of its foe." (De Test. An., 5;43(i).) Shortt quotes Loofs for the view that this attitude in Tertullian is derived from Stoic influence. (The Influence of Philosophy on the Mind of Tertullian, pp. 89-90.)
- (2) Adv. Marc., II:XXVII; 112. cf. III:VI; 129, III:IX; 137, III:XVI; 152, IV:X; 209, and IV:XXI; 263.
- (3) Adv. Prax., XVI; 368-369(ii).
- (4) Adv. Marc., II:XXVII; 112.
- (5) Apol., 21;92(i).
- (6) De Pat., III; 207(i).
- (7) For Adam's trespass induced an "inflamed tumor", until, in due time, the Lord mixed the medicine and "prepared the means of healing", (De Scorp., V; 390-391(ii), driving out "the lethargy of death"). He has this, probably, from Irenaeus; from him, too what he calls the divine scheme of man's destined promotion following from the creation of the lower and higher worlds. (Adv. Marc., II:IV; 65-66.) Even in Christ there are stages of knowledge, through which the apostle (St. Paul) passed. (De Pud., I; 58(iii).)
- (8) cf. De Bapt., IV; 236(i).

the lost sheep applies to the lost heathen. "Tell me," says Tertullian, "is mankind not all one flock of God, the Lord and Shepherd of the universal nations?" Christians are not otherwise made than by being first 'lost' (as heathen), then, 'resought' by God and 'carried back' by Christ.⁽¹⁾ So it is of the lamp lit to recover the lost coin. Nay, rather this whole world, Tertullian reassures us, is but "one house of all".⁽²⁾

There are several of what seem to be less developed germs of characteristic Stoicisms and in mentioning these briefly we may consider this part of our task to be complete.

There is a touch of the Stoic self-sufficiency in Tertullian's "My only business is with myself: Except that, other care I have none, save not to care".⁽³⁾ A faint suggestion of the universalism which Stoicism preached may come to us in that passage where commenting on Peter's experience with the sheet let down from heaven,⁽⁴⁾ he describes it as a "vision of universal community", and, according to Routh, probably wrote "communitatis omnium".⁽⁵⁾ Was his necessarianism influenced by the Stoic conception of Fate?⁽⁶⁾ "What is written," he says, "cannot but have been."⁽⁷⁾ It was even necessary that there

(1): (2) De Pud., VII; 70-72(iii).

(3) De Pall., V; 198(iii).

(4) Acts X: 9f.

(5) De Orat., XXV; 200(i); footnote (7) Ed. (for Oehler's Communitatis omnis).

(6) It certainly seems to have inspired his traducian theory of the origin of the soul and the subsequent doctrine of original sin. Heredity is transmitted through the soul which is 'corporeal', and conceived together with the body in the womb where simultaneously it also receives its sex. The infant soul is in the semen of its sire, along with sin, of course. Greenslade is of the opinion that Tertullian prepared the way for the pessimistic doctrine of the Fall which later became prominent in the West. (Vide Library of Christian Classics (Early Latin Theology), Vol. V, p. 23.)

(7) De Car. Chris. III; 169(ii).

should be heresies, as it was that there should be evil, and that the Lord should be betrayed.⁽¹⁾ The very Scriptures were so fashioned by the will of God as to furnish materials for heretics. The latter had to be.⁽²⁾

Where did Tertullian get the idea that all creation is instinct with recurrence (*recidiva est*), that "Whatever you may chance upon, has already existed; whatever you have lost, returns without fail again"?⁽³⁾ or that "only one thing in this life greatly concerns us, and that is, to get quickly out of it",⁽⁴⁾ or that "There is nothing after death to be feared, if there is nothing to be felt",⁽⁵⁾ or that all things 'consist' (*consistunt*) by the operation of that God who by His power created the earth?⁽⁶⁾ He wholeheartedly agrees with the Stoics on the question of experience in sleep, regarding the latter as a temporary suspension of the body's but not the soul's activities.⁽⁷⁾ Nor is he far from pantheism when he declares of God that "All things are full of their Author and occupied by Him...",⁽⁸⁾ and that it is enough that "natural elements, foremost in site and state should have been more

(1) De Praes. Haer., XXX; 34(ii).

(2) Op.cit., XXXIX; 47-48(ii).

(3) De Res. Car., XII; 235(ii). "All things return to their former state (*omnia in statum redeunt*), after having gone out of sight; all things begin after they have ended; they come to an end for the very purpose of coming into existence again." This could almost be construed as a type of Stoic palingenesis.

(4) Apol., xl;124(i).

(5) De Test. An., 4;41(i), a typical thought of Seneca.

(6) Adv. Herm., XLV; 117(ii); cf. St. Paul, Col. I;17.

(7) De An., XLIII; 508, 510(ii). Plutarch had gone very fully into this whole question, and his opinions, Turner informs us, "cross all party lines" in the second century (*The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 223).

(8) Tertullian's liking of the Son to a ray sent out from the life of God is very like Stoic pantheism, and borders, in fact, on Subordinationism. (Vide Apol., 21;93(i) and cf. De An., XIX; 456(ii) where Tertullian contends that trees have not only vitality, as the philosophers allow, but even ability or knowledge, derived from the vital source of things.)

readily regarded as divine than as unworthy of God".⁽¹⁾ His anthropology has also a familiar Stoic ring. There is an inner and an outer man in the most literal sense of the word. The inner man, the soul, is born of the divine afflatus (also a Stoic notion) and is, in form, an exact replica of the body, both being, in fact, 'bodies', as Stoicism believed.⁽²⁾ It looks, too, as if Tertullian leaned toward the latter in his conviction that the divine being who appears on earth can never be anything but a part of the transcendent deity.⁽³⁾ His thinking, finally, reveals affinities with the Stoic ideal of living agreeably to Nature and the consensus gentium. Whatever is opposed to nature (or reason) is, ipso facto, opposed to God. The gross overelaboration of civilized society, as Tertullian pictures it, is a travesty of God's work. Man cannot plead ignorance of God or Providence, for the world itself is inscribed with the signature of its maker, and the inscription is read in each man's conscience. The authority of common-sense is appealed to along with that of nature, for example, in addressing the dealers in crowns.⁽⁴⁾ Much is made, too, of popular assent to God's existence from within the soul of man ("Good God", "God knows", etc.)⁽⁵⁾ and this by itself is considered sufficient proof. Nature,

(1) Tertullian, Adv. Marc., I:XIII; 24.

(2) De An., IX; 429(ii). The soul has ears, for instance, that it may hear the voice of the Lord.

(3) Adv. Marc., III:VI; 130.

(4) De Cor., 7;340-341(i) of De Jej., VI; 130(iii).

(5) It is thus, says Tertullian, that its divinity "bursts forth in prophetic forecasts". (De An., XLI; 506(ii).) "O, striking testimony," he cries, "to truth, which in the very midst of daemons obtains a witness for us Christians." (De Test. An., 2;39(i).) Variations on the central idea (conscience, common-sense, etc.) all go back to the belief in reason as the ruler of the cosmos and the rudder of human life. In the De Test. An., 6;45(i) Tertullian declares, "Man is the one name belonging to every nation upon earth...every country has its own speech, but the subjects of speech are /

in many, is one source of the knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and of the knowledge of God in all, so also is the conscience of a nation when it attests the supreme divinity. Then, there are other intelligences, rational creatures with the same basic human nature as ourselves.⁽¹⁾ Common-sense seizes on the simple and self-evident. It may not lie (like the divine reason) at the very heart of things, which can often be at variance with the superficial appearances, but, for all that, it is divine.⁽²⁾

(5) continued from previous page:

are common to all." This is in Roman jurisprudence the basis of Natural Law, originating in the *κοινὴ ἐννοία* of Stoicism. Tertullian seizes upon this as a convenient device to explain the natural attraction of noble souls to Christianity, and as the common ground between the cultured pagan and the Church.

- (1) De Res. Car., III; 220(ii).
 (2) De Res. Car., III; 221(ii).

III. RELATIONS WITH CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

NOTE: THE CHURCH AT CARTHAGE

Materials for an adequate reconstruction of the beginnings of Christianity in Africa do not, unfortunately, exist. Such records as we have commence with the notice of the martyrdoms at Scillium,⁽¹⁾ in the second century, when we are confronted with a church at Carthage, culturally established⁽²⁾ and fully organized.⁽³⁾

Mommsen mentions the advantages accruing to world-Jewry from its possessing the Septuagint and says that in a comparable sense "the translation of the Christian writings into the language of the West at Carthage became of decisive importance", the more so because that language was not the cultivated product of the refined imperial age, soon to fade from common life, but the decomposed Latin out of which the Romance languages were evolved. "If," he concludes, "Christianity

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- (1) The early Greek Acts of the African Martyrs may actually be as old as our Book of Acts. (Harnack, *Mission*, ii, p. 277, foot (3).) The Greek language, of course, disappeared early from the Church in Africa, in fact, the Greek period of the latter is unknown.
- (2) The first African bishops were of mainly plebeian stock (Harnack, *Mission*, ii, p. 276, foot (1), quoting Toutain, *Les cites romaines de la Tunisie*, pp. 228f.), but by Tertullian's time Christianity had worked its way well up the social scale. Perpetua, martyred at Thuburbo in 202 or 203 was of well-to-do family; and Cyprian marks the culmination of this elevation of the Church in social life.
- (3) The centre of Church life and government was the urban community. The Romans took over the Punic system of urban organization, and with the latter the Church would fall into line. The Scillitan martyrs bear mainly Roman names, and we are warranted in assuming that Tertullian identified himself and his Christianity with Roman life in general. He speaks not without pride of the benefits conferred by the Pax Romana, and in addressing the non-Roman races he betrays something of racial superiority. (Vide *Ad. Nat.*, II:XVII; 506(1).) His situation, one might say, was comparable to that of an Anglican Englishman in what was British India. The Latin Bible was never translated into Punic, requiring to be rendered viva voce during the Church's public worship into the native speech.

arose in Syria, it was in and through Africa that it became the religion for the world."⁽¹⁾

(A) The Earlier Phase

Tertullian joined the Church at Carthage, it is estimated, about 195 A.D. when he would be somewhere between forty and forty-five years of age. He had evidently witnessed the persecution of the Christians, for he hints at the compulsion which, by their steadfastness, was laid on the beholder to follow the new faith.⁽²⁾ At all events, we find him in 197 standing forth in their defence,⁽³⁾ and, from then on, a steady stream of pamphlets and books flowed from his pen.⁽⁴⁾ That he was a Presbyter seems borne out by internal evidence.⁽⁵⁾

In his apologetic task he was compelled, like Clement and Irenaeus, to face his challengers on two fronts, the pagans without and the heretics within, though he was engaged also in a sort of flank action with the Jews⁽⁶⁾ and later on with orthodox Christianity itself; but the main task could not be shirked. Laistner quotes Augustine for the three main types in the Church, viz., (1) the illiterate (idiotae),⁽⁷⁾

- (1) The Latinized Church in Africa "plays the very first part" in the development of Christianity. (Mommson, op.cit., p. 343.)
- (2) Vide Ad Scap., 5;52(i).
- (3) With the Ad Nationes and the Apologeticum.
- (4) Bishop Kaye's grouping of these writings is probably the best known, but Greenslade's classification is worth reproducing here. Vide Appendix at end of thesis.
- (5) The De Anima records a case of ecstatic trance in the congregation at Carthage in regard to which Tertullian says: "Forte nescio quid de anima disserueramus...Post transacta sollemnia, dimissa plebe, quo usu solet nobis," etc. (Vide De An., IX; 428(ii).)
- (6) There were many Greek-speaking Jews and numerous synagogues at Carthage (Harnack, Mission, ii, p. 276, footnote (2), p. 277, footnote (3)).
- (7) ~~idiotae~~ in the Greek, a very specialized term meaning deficiency^t in technical or special knowledge, later equivalent to ignorant. The /

(2) the products of grammarian instruction and (3) the highly educated. This is the distinction Clement made on intellectual grounds, but Tertullian in his later period made a subtler distinction still, according to which there were, even amongst Church leaders, those who adhered to the historical tradition transmitted to them through their predecessors in the Faith, and those like himself who claimed to be the living channels of the original Revelation still operative in the Church.

(B) The Later Period

Lietzmann has shown⁽¹⁾ with what justification Montanism could presume to insinuate itself into the Church's life and thought. There was an impressive element of asceticism in the primitive Kerygma. John⁽²⁾ comes ascetic-fashion from the desert preparing the way of the Lord. Then, at the close of Jesus' earthly life, the hope of the Parousia gives rise to prophetic millennialism. When, finally, the Fourth evangelist replaced the Parousia-concept with that of the Paraclete, materials were made readily available to those who became the architects of the so-called "New Prophecy".

Montanism as such was of Eastern origin.⁽³⁾ Its founder was the

(7) continued from previous page:

The former is taken to be the real meaning in Acts, IV:13 (Vulgate): "quod homines essent sine litteris et idiotae" (Laistner, op.cit., pp. 36-37; footnote 30, footnotes to Ch. II at back).

- (1) The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 189ff.: The Era of the Church Fathers, pp. 124-133.
- (2) John the Baptist. Recent discoveries near the Dead Sea seem to suggest his connection with the Essenes, a recognized ascetic sect, but of the recent study by Burrows, "The Dead Sea Scrolls".
- (3) Montanus, like Praxeas, the modalist, and Hermogenes, was of Asian origin. Vide Harnack, Mission, ii, p. 277, footnote (3).

typical by-product of an age which threw up so many men of genius and so many mountebanks, out of the vortices of its spiritual and intellectual life. The new Enthusiasm found a second home, as someone has put it, in North Africa. It claimed in terms of spirituality what Gnosticism stood for along mainly intellectual lines. The distinction is important for the Montanists seem never to have repudiated the central teachings of the Church, the grounds of difference and disagreement consisting in questions of discipline⁽¹⁾ and spiritual gifts. The former, according to the orthodox interpretation, Tertullian's co-Montanists rejected categorically; the latter in the true sense they claimed to have inherited and to exercise for the Holy Spirit through the Paraclete whom Montanus announced himself to be. The "prophets" in their meaning of the word were superior to the clergy; prophetic utterances took precedence of Scripture. It was, as Turner points out, a difference between "a Church of regular channels and one in which the gifts of Christ were transmitted through spiritual persons".⁽²⁾ The difference was, however, of a fundamental character. The claim of the Montanists to direct revelation was the main underlying issue throughout the course of the debate.

One of the central features of this deviationist minority was what

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- (1) cf. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 127, where he says of Montanism that at the outset it "suggests hostility rather to the policy than to the principle of hierarchy". Montanism has been compared to English dissent as accepting the doctrines of the Church for the most part but repudiating her orders.
- (2) The sect bears in many ways a close resemblance to the present-day Jehovah's Witnesses; and seems to renew itself in modified forms throughout the course of the Church's history, the Buchanites, for instance, who at Irvine experienced a similar new visitation of the Holy Ghost, with the contemporary Paraclete in the person of the Mrs. Buchan from whom the movement got its name.

the Roman Catholics would call its doctrine of development. The Montanists support Harnack's view of them as representing a protest against the dimming of the Church's eschatological ideals. The orthodox charter for their "millennial dawn" conceptions was the book of Revelation, and the Fourth Gospel's promise of the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to guide believers into all the truth.⁽¹⁾ The Montanist, in short, did not believe any more than the Gnostic in the "faith once for all delivered to the saints". He stood for a progressive revelation culminating in the chiliastically-conceived advent of the New Jerusalem. Yet this was his greatest weakness, for it was, as Turner says, on "the precarious data of illumination" that Montanism was built.⁽²⁾

The system was soon enough declared to be heretical. In what did the heresy consist? Turner replies, "Its ecstatic character." The scandal of Montanism was its sheer irrationality, its followers deporting themselves, it is maintained, like men possessed. In summoning the Church, Turner adds, to retrace her steps, it even betrays a certain lack of faith in the guidance of the Paraclete to which it appealed so much. It tended, however, in its subsequent history to be much more orthodox, its chief latter-day offences being "an exaggerated emphasis upon theological traditions...beginning to prove inadequate for the expression of the fulness of Christian truth".⁽³⁾

According to Jerome, Tertullian was driven by the envy and contumelious treatment of the Roman clergy to join forces with

(1) John XVI:13.

(2) The Pattern of Christian Truth, pp. 124-125.

(3) Op.cit., p. 132.

Montanism. Whatever the cause, the fact seems indisputable, representing the final protestation of his faith in what he believed to be, in Harnack's sense, essential Christianity.⁽¹⁾ The transition, at any rate, is marked by the intensification of his attack upon whatever he considered a betrayal of the true Christian way of life.

Of his post-conversion, personal career, there remains little to record. Tradition has it that he died in extreme old age, but the exact length of his life, and the date of his death⁽²⁾ remain unknown.

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- (1) It is believed that he actually founded his own sect, known as the "Tertullianists" which survived him by two centuries.
- (2) A conjectural date is given by Quasten as after 220 A.D. (Patrology, ii, p. 247).

IV. TERTULLIAN'S MAIN POSITION STATED: THE ATTACK ON PHILOSOPHY

(A) Athens or Jerusalem?

In Book II of the *Ad Nationes* Tertullian throws down the gauntlet to those whom he considers opponents in his apologetic task. "It is therefore," he writes, "against these things that our contest lies - against the institutions of our ancestors, against the authority of tradition,⁽¹⁾ the laws of our governors, the reasonings of the wise... all which things have had their part in consolidating the spurious system"⁽²⁾ of the gods. "I shall evidently," he warns us in the *De Anima*, "have mostly to contend with the philosophers."⁽³⁾

Now if there is any ground for comparison between them and the Christians, it lies in what they have borrowed from the teaching of the Church, and not the Church from them.⁽⁴⁾ In the process of drawing on the Old Testament they have perverted what they found by altering what pleased them to suit their own designs, because they lacked adequate faith in the divinity of the Scriptures and, being still under the veil, had not the proper means of understanding them. Not only was this effect seen in the Old Testament, it was observable in the New

(1) As the subsequent phrases clearly show, Tertullian is speaking as an erstwhile pagan to the pagans of his day.

(2) *Ad Nat.*, II:I; 464(i). The poets and the dramatists are indicted also (*Ad Nat.*, I:X; 443-444(i); cf. II:I; 465(i). "When, therefore, the philosophers have ingeniously composed their physical theology out of their own conjectures, when the poets have drawn their mythical from fables, and the several nations have forged their gentile polytheism according to their own will, where in the world must truth be placed?" (*Ad Nat.*, loc.cit.)

(3) *De Anim.*, I; 411(ii).

(4) *Apol.*, 47;131(i). "What poet or sophist has not drunk at the fountain of the prophets?" (in loc.).

Testament as well. "Some of their brood with their opinions have even adulterated our new-given Christian revelation," and corrupted it into a system of philosophic doctrines. They have struck off many and inexplicable by-ways from the one way.⁽¹⁾ Thus they have changed the simplicity of the truth they were too proud to believe, and what was certain they have, by their fastidious admixtures, infected with uncertainty.⁽²⁾ Hence, what passes with them for investigation of the Scriptures ends up as the transformation of the latter into the product of their own minds. They cannot really be counted wise, since, where their discovery began they wandered away from "the beginning of wisdom" which is "the fear of God".⁽³⁾

Tertullian proceeds to make the variety of the philosophic schools a further evidence of their service to untruth. More diversity is discoverable among them than agreement, since even in their agreement one can discover their diversity.⁽⁴⁾ "Where does truth come in when

- (1) Apol., 47;132(i). This seems to be aimed at warning new converts against assuming from the varieties of parties in the Church that Christianity is on a par with the philosophies, or against tending to condemn the truth from the different ways in which it is defended.
- (2) Whatever things in their systems agree with prophetic wisdom, they either attribute to some other source, or apply in some other sense. Thus, truth is jeopardized, for they pretend that it is either helped by falsehood, or that falsehood derives support from truth which has at this rate been wellnigh excluded by the philosophers through the poisons with which they have infected it. The method by which the culprits confuse the issue is described in some detail, and the remedy prescribed. The sentiments held by Christians in common with philosophers must be separated from the arguments of the philosophers, and the arguments which both heretics and Christians employ, from the opinions of the philosophers. To effect this, all questions must be recalled to God's inspired standard, except such simple cases as being obviously free of preconceived conceits one may fairly allow on human testimony. (Vide De An., II;415(ii).)
- (3) Ad Nat., II:II; 466(1).
- (4) De An., II; 414(ii).

all these have produced their repeated concoctions?"...Philosophy is itself "divided into its own manifold heresies, by the variety of its mutually repugnant sects..."⁽¹⁾ Those mockers and corrupters of the truth they merely affect to hold, caring for nothing else but glory; and the philosophically-minded forsake their principles, while still retaining the name and honour of wisdom. True Christians, on the other hand, long intensely for the truth, and maintain it in its integrity.⁽²⁾ The irony of the situation is that, compared with the treatment meted out to the Christians, the philosophers can make themselves obnoxious even to the Emperor, and get away with it.⁽³⁾

Furthermore, these philosophical extravagances are characterized by unlimited verbosity, "...from one or two drops of truth a perfect flood of argumentation".⁽⁴⁾ Paul's warning to "beware of subtle words and philosophy" is quoted,⁽⁵⁾ which is meant, says Tertullian, to signify worldly learning, and which the Apostle foresaw would do violent injury to the truth. He was talking from experience of the loquacious city (*linguatam civitatem*), Athens, where he had a taste of its talkers and its huxtering wiseacres.⁽⁶⁾ All heresies stand, accordingly, condemned, "on the ground of their consisting of the resources of subtle speech, and the rules of philosophy".⁽⁷⁾

The unpardonable offence of the philosophers, however, is the part

(1) De Praes. Haer., VII; 9(ii).

(2) Apol., 46; 129(i).

(3) Ad Nat., I:IV; 423(i).

(4) Ad Nat., II:II; 466(i).

(5) Col., II:8.

(6) De An., III; 416-417(ii). The reference is to Acts XVII:18-32. Tertullian elsewhere refers to the straining of the philosophers after "that facility of language which is mere talk rather than teaching." (De An., II; 413(ii).)

(7) Adv. Marc., V:XIX; 472.

that they have played insiding and abetting the heresies,⁽¹⁾ "the doctrines" of men and "of daemons, produced for itching ears by the spirit of this world's wisdom," which the Lord called "foolishness", and to confound which "chose the foolish things of the world". The culprits, with the poets and the pagans, may not have substituted heathen worship for the true religion, but, as transmitters of the heathen superstitions,⁽²⁾ they are, in fact, "haereticorum patriarchae".⁽³⁾

In fact, philosophy is the material of the world's wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and dispensation of God, whence came the aeons and who knows what infinite forms,⁽⁴⁾ and the trinity of man in the system of Valentinus who belonged to Plato's school. From a similar source is derived Marcion's better god, with all his tranquillity. Again, when matter is equated with God, you have the teaching of Zeno, and Heraclitus comes in when any doctrine is alleged touching a god of fire. The same subject-matter is discussed over and over again by the heretics and the philosophers; the same arguments are involved - Whence comes evil? - Why is it permitted? - What is the origin of man? and in what manner does he come? Besides these, there is the question which Valentinus has very lately raised - Whence comes God? which he settles with the answer - "From enthymesis"⁽⁵⁾ and

(1) The Jewish heretics are referred to as the "Christian Saducees" for denying the resurrection of the whole man. (De Res. Car., XXXVI; 278(ii).) The heretics associate with magicians, mountebanks, astrologers and philosophers. (De Praes. Haer., XLIII; 52(ii).) Their systems which "in the apostolic times were in a rude form" are still the same, "only in a much more polished shape". (Op.cit., XXXIV; 41(ii).) They still make claim to occult knowledge which they deny the first apostles, Paul only being accepted. (De Praes. Haer., XXIII; 26(ii), XXIV; 28(ii).)

(2) Ad Nat., II:IX; 483(i).

(3) Adv. Herm., VIII; 67(ii).

(4) Formae: ideae, according to Oehler.

(5) Meaning invention.

ectroma!"⁽¹⁾ Unhappy Aristotle, cries Tertullian, who for these men invented dialectics, the art of building up and pulling down... embarrassing even to itself, retracting everything and treating actually of nothing! Whence spring those "fables and endless genealogies"⁽²⁾ and "unprofitable questions",⁽³⁾ and "words which spread like a cancer"?⁽⁴⁾ When the Apostle would restrain us from all these, he expressly names philosophy.⁽⁵⁾ What, indeed, has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church, what between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from "the porch of Solomon", who taught that "the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart".⁽⁶⁾ Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition. We want no curious disputation after possessing Jesus Christ; no investigation after the enjoyment of the Gospel. With our faith we desire no additional belief, for this is the presupposition of our faith (*Hoc enim prius credimus*) that there is nothing further we have any need to believe.⁽⁷⁾

The crimes of the philosophers are described in more detail and have to do mainly with God, Creation, and the destiny of the soul. As to Creation, the authority of the physical philosophers is, according to Tertullian, maintained among the heathen as the special property (*mancipium*) of wisdom,⁽⁸⁾ Hermogenes, a contemporary of Tertullian,

- (1) Abortion.
- (2) 1 Tim., I:4.
- (3) Titus, III:9.
- (4) 2 Tim., II:17.
- (5) Tertullian is quoting Col., II:8.
- (6) Quoted from the Wisdom of Solomon, i:I.
- (7) The whole passage is taken mainly from *De Praes. Haer.*, VII:8-10(ii).
- (8) *Ad Nat.*, II:II; 465(i).

being accused of turning away from the Christians to the philosophers, from the Church to the Academy and the Porch.⁽¹⁾ The main issue seems to have centred in what is labelled by Tertullian "the mystery of matter",⁽²⁾ and the Pythagoreans, Plato and the Stoics are referred to, not to mention the "renowned Mercurius Trismegistus" who, for all that he was master of all physical philosophy was unable to think the mystery out.⁽³⁾ From the Stoics, we are told, Marcion learned how to set matter on the same level with the Divine Creator.⁽⁴⁾ But, apart from him, the only others to have penetrated the problem are the philosophers - for neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor even Christ knew anything about it.⁽⁵⁾ The aim of the Stoics was to establish that matter existed forever, unborn and unmade, having neither beginning nor end, the material out of which all things afterwards were created by the Lord.

This refusal to ascribe an origin or conclusion to the created universe was inspired by a desire to demonstrate the divine nature of the material elements, the very error Paul is censoring in his Epistle to the Galatians, that "physical or natural superstition which holds the elements to be God".⁽⁶⁾ With subtle irony Tertullian observes, "The fault, I suppose, of the divine doctrine lies in its springing

(1) Adv. Herm., I; 56(ii).

(2): (3) Adv. Valent., XV; 141(ii).

(4) Adv. Marc., V: XIX; 472. Tertullian speaks of "those very professors of wisdom (sapientiae professores), from whose genius every heresy derives its spirit", who called the unworthy elements of the world divine, according to their various schools of thought (Thales assuming the basic world-stuff to be water; Heraclitus, fire; Anaximenes, air; Anaximander, all the heavenly bodies; Strato, earth and sky; Zeno, air and ether; and Plato, the stars). Adv. Marc., I: XIII; 23.

(5) Adv. Herm., VIII; 67(ii).

(6) Adv. Marc. V: IV; 386: Gal., IV; 8.

from Judaea rather than from Greece. Christ made a mistake, too, in sending forth fishermen to preach, rather than the sophist.

"Accordingly, whatever noxious vapours, exhaled by philosophy, obscure the clear and wholesome atmosphere of truth, it will be for Christians to clear away, both by shattering to pieces the arguments which are drawn from the principles of things" - (i.e. those of the philosophers) - "and by opposing to them the maxims of heavenly wisdom - (i.e. those revealed by the Lord); "in order that both the pitfalls wherewith philosophy captivates the heathen may be removed, and the means employed by heresy to shake the faith of Christians may be repressed." (1)

God had offenders in those wise and prudent ones who would not seek after Him, though He was to be discovered in His so many and mighty works, or who rashly philosophized about Him, and thereby furnished the heretics with their arts (ingenia). (2) They did not expound God as they found him, "but rather disputed about His quality, and His nature, and even about His abode". (3) The worst of their aberrations is the trouble they give themselves to prove the divine indifference or impassibility. Marcion derived the principal term (4) of his theology from Epicurus, (5) and the Gnostics would have us think of the "lonely goodness" (6) of God. How, challenges Tertullian, could

- (1) De An., III; 417(ii). The philosophers are reminiscent of Thales of Miletus who, while star-gazing, fell into a well...they are stupidly curious about natural phenomena, while all the time oblivious of the Creator and Ruler of all. (Ad. Nat., II:IV; 473(i).)
- (2) Adv. Marc., IV:XXV; 282-283.
- (3) Ad. Nat., II:II; 466(i). When the philosophers are so incompetent to define what they mean by God, how could they really fear Him? (in loc.)
- (4) Hebetis = otiosus.
- (5) Adv. Marc., V:XIX; 472.
- (6) Adv. Marc., I:XXVI; 50.

a previously uncommunicative God begin all of a sudden to communicate Himself? How is salvation, an activity of goodness, to be reconciled with celestial neutrality?⁽¹⁾ Nothing is so suited as salvation to the character of God.⁽²⁾ His nature would negate itself, if he should cease to act;⁽³⁾ and we are taught these things by God, not by the philosophers.⁽⁴⁾

Heretical speculation about matter and creation generally has, in Tertullian's estimate, also impeached the divine dispensation by suborning the veracity of the senses. Plato is indicated as the inspiration of the dividing-line which Valentinus drew between the bodily sense-organs and the intellectual faculties.⁽⁵⁾ This dualism is responsible for the creation of the aeons and the genealogies.⁽⁶⁾ If there is any difference, however, it is only a difference, says Tertullian, in the classification of the objects of perception, not as to the whereabouts of sense and intellect,⁽⁷⁾ of soul (anima) and mind (animus). "But why," he protests, "adopt such excruciating means of torturing simple knowledge and crucifying the truth?⁽⁸⁾...O, most insolent Academy! You overthrow the entire condition of human life; you disturb the whole order of nature; you obscure the good providence of God Himself, for the senses of man which God has appointed over all His works: that we might understand, inhabit, dispense and enjoy them you reproach as fallacious and treacherous tyrants!"⁽⁹⁾

(1) Adv. Marc., I:XXV; 49.

(2) Op.cit., II:XXVII; III.

(3) Op.cit., I:XXII; 40.

(4) Op.cit., II:XVI; 90.

(5) De An., XVIII; 450(ii).

(6) Ibid. In order to establish contact between the mundane and the supramundane spheres, produced by the demarcation.

(7) De An., XVIII; 452(ii).

(8) De An., XVIII; 451(ii).

(9) De An., XVII; 448(ii).

In similar fashion have the philosophers sought to repudiate the resurrection of the flesh. Where in this matter do they stand? Tertullian finds the Epicureans and the Stoics (Seneca) opposed to the idea, though their teaching is not accepted by all the philosophic schools. It is some satisfaction that the no less important philosophy of Pythagoras, and Empedocles, and the Platonists assumes the contrary point of view declaring the soul to be immortal.⁽¹⁾ Those who so far reveal some sort of agreement with the Christian position are given this much credit by Tertullian, "They, at least, knocked at the door of truth, although they went not in";⁽²⁾ but, on the whole, his attitude to the philosophers is expressed in vigorously uncompromising terms, intended to leave us in no doubt as to where, so far as he seems to have known his own mind in the matter, he personally stood. "Where," he sums it all up, "is there any likeness between the Christian and the philosopher? between the disciple of Greece and of heaven? between the man whose object is fame, and the man whose object is life? between the talker and the doer? between the man who builds up, and the man who pulls down? between the friend and the foe of error? between one who corrupts the truth, and him who restores and teaches it?"⁽³⁾

(B) Culture or Christianity?

To the minds of his contemporaries, and in Tertullian's own mind, there existed no clear dividing-line between culture and philosophy, as we tend to think of them. The main (and increasingly merged)

(1) De Res. Carn., I;216(ii).

(2) Ibid.

(3) Apol., XLVI; 130-131(i).

traditions of the philosophic schools had come by the second century to represent a generally-received philosophy of life, and linked themselves readily with every aspect of the social customs and institutions of the age. Any division, therefore, indicated at this stage, or suggested in what follows, is largely arbitrary, and artificial, for the sphere of culture and philosophy was one and indivisible, so far as the topics now to be dealt with are concerned.

Tertullian directs his attack first against the religion of paganism as represented by the gods. The pagan will meet this with the argument that, really, such things are nothing more than fable or the merest poetic licence. He is not the least bit worried, he will assure you, on that score. Indeed, he respects these things as being part of the "indispensable fine arts, the very pabulum of high-class education, and the foundation of literature". It is a fact, declares Tertullian, that the studies of upper-class society are prosecuted by these means, though Plato knew best how to handle them. He would have banished them, including Homer, "the crowned head of them all"! ⁽¹⁾

The trouble arises to begin with in the educational sphere. Take, for example, schoolmasters, ⁽²⁾ and all other professors of literature. Because of their alleged "affinity with manifold idolatry", they have to teach about the gods and keep the latter's respective festivals. The very first fee received by every schoolmaster is consecrated to Minerva. The schoolmaster may not be an idolater himself, yet he must be shunned as such. "But," objects someone, "if teaching literature is not lawful for God's servants, neither will learning be. How is

(1) Ad Nat., II:VII; 479(i).

(2) "Where," asks Tertullian, "is the wise, where the grammarian...?" (his reading of the "Scribe" of our 1 Cor., I:20, A.V.). Vide De Idol., IX; 153(i).

intelligence to be developed or instruction given without literature which is the means of training for life itself? Why repudiate secular studies so needful to the pursuit of the study of things divine?"

Tertullian as usual is ready with his reply. Assume, he says, that literary erudition is essential (even though it can neither be admitted nor denied). Believers may learn, but not teach literature, because there is a sense in which by teaching one commends what is taught. Necessity, however, is allowed as an excuse, seeing that there is no other way to learn. As to the defilements incidental to school-life from public and scholastic solemnities, the pupil need not attend them any more than the teacher need frequent.⁽¹⁾

In general, then, Christians will have nothing to do with "the literature and the teaching, perverted in its best results, which is believed in its errors rather than in its truth", even if some of its authors do subscribe to a monotheistic view of life. There is nothing in heathen writers which a Christian approves. Notwithstanding, there are those who will maintain, cautions Tertullian, that some enlightenment emanates from secular literature. Well, if so, he replies, it can be only because secular literature got its light from the prior sacred writings. The light that flows from heathen writers flows, in reality, from the scriptural fountain-head. Believe if you must your books, he says to his pagan contemporaries, but so much the more believe those which are divine, which, in the witness of the soul itself accord with the light of nature. Choose which of these you ascertain to be the more faithful friend of truth. Your own books may be distrusted, but neither God nor nature lie.

(1) De Idol., X; 155(i).

The arts come under the same ban, for they have ministered to the rise and spread of idolatry. How can things be had free from the taint of the latter whose inventors, as a result of their discoveries, have been accorded a place amongst the gods? The ungrateful nations adore "the toys of the arts and the works of their own hands".⁽¹⁾ Little wonder! for the former were introduced into the world by means of sinful angels,⁽²⁾ are consecrated to the service of the beings who dwell in the names of their founders, and play a central part in the entertainment world. In fact, the daemons subtly bestowed on men the gifts whose artistic exercise was in due time to be called forth by the public shows,⁽³⁾ which go back to comic and tragic secular literature, and this the Christian, as already shown, despises as foolishness in God's sight.⁽⁴⁾

There is again what we call the world of sport - the pagan spectacles; and here Tertullian has first of all to deal with the eloquent protest, "But the racecourse is mentioned in the Scriptures," meeting it with the counter-argument, "I grant it readily, but look at what goes on in the racecourse and stadium. Consider the disfiguration of the human countenance, nothing less than a disfiguration of the image of God Himself - and the muscle-building exercises to produce artificial bodies, an improvement, presumably, on the Creator's handiwork! - Greece

(1) De Pat., II; 207(i).

(2) De Cult. Fem., II:X; 327(i).

(3) We should, forsooth, adds Tertullian, have gone even further back, and banned all further argument by showing that the daemons "pre-determining in their own interests from the first, amongst other evils of idolatry, the pollutions of the public shows, with the object of drawing man away from his Lord, and binding him to their own service", acted in the subtle fashion hinted at. (De Spect., 10;19-20(i).)

(4) De Spect., 17;25(i).

feeding up her athletes in blissful inactivity! Or take, as a further instance, the serpent-like art of the wrestler which is "a devil's thing" - and crowns! What pleasure is there to be striven for in these?⁽¹⁾ "But," the protest continues, "God looks down upon the shows." "Aye, and so," Tertullian answers dryly, "does the sun pour down without defilement on a sewer; but it is a sewer just the same!"⁽²⁾ It is all "opposed to Nature", and "everything which is against nature deserves to be branded as monstrous among all men!"⁽³⁾ As for the vaunted spectacles, there is one spectacle that affords real pleasure to the eye, that rouses Tertullian to expectation and makes his heart rejoice - "to see along with ~~persecuting~~ ^{deified} Emperors and governors of provinces who burned the Christians, the philosophers who scouted the hereafter, the poets, tragedians, playactors, charioteers, wrestlers, and all the rest of them tossing in the fiery billows in the judgment after death! As for the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, "Whatever they are, they are nobler...than the circus, than both theatres and every racecourse".⁽⁴⁾ The objector, however, is not to be outdone, "But are not all things good?" "Agreed," retorts Tertullian, "but it is the use of them that counts, for the world is God's, but the worldly is the devil's."⁽⁵⁾

Tertullian's next tilt is at contemporary Fashion which, as we know, was not a purely pagan concern. It was prominent in the Church at Carthage after the well-to-do began to embrace the Faith. He speaks

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- (1) De Spect., 18;25-26(i).
 - (2) Op.cit., 20;27(i).
 - (3) De Cor., 5;339(i).
 - (4) De Spect., 30;34-35(i).
 - (5) Op.cit., 15;23(i).

of the effeminate boots of Venetian shoe-factories, of cosmetics which he stigmatizes as "additional outlay on the divine plastic art". Female attire has become so much of a problem for him as to require a separate study to itself. The entire range of contemporary luxury-living is passed under scathing review and dismissed with the curt remark, "These purulencies of a state who will eliminate and exsuppurate save a bemantled speech," (*Sermo palliatus*).⁽¹⁾ The remedy calls for the use of such formidable weapons as the scalpel, the cathartic, and the cauterizing-iron.

Not only the ladies but the philosophers shock his sensibilities. They philosophize in purple!⁽²⁾ But his grand manifesto against all culture is contained in that oft-quoted passage in the *De Testimonio Animae* where, apostrophizing the soul itself, he says: "But I call thee not as when, fashioned in schools, trained in libraries, fed up in Attic academies and porticoes, thou belchest forth thy wisdom. I address thee, simple, and rude, and uncultured, and untaught, such as they have thee who have thee only, that very thing, pure and entire, of the road, the street, the workshop. I want thine inexperience since in thy small experience no-one feels any confidence. I demand of thee the things thou bringest with thee into man, which thou knowest either from thyself, or from thine author, whoever he may be. Thou art not, as I well know, Christian; for a man is not born, he becomes a Christian."⁽³⁾

(1) *De Pall.*, V; 200(iii).
 (2) *De Pall.*, IV; 194(iii).
 (3) *De Test. An.*, I; 37(i).

(C) Knowledge or Faith?

Tertullian takes strong exception to the curiositas which characterized the heretics, and he accuses them of falsely interpreting St. Paul's words, "Prove all things,"⁽¹⁾ as well as that other dominical text, "Seek and ye shall find."

The advice to "seek", submits Tertullian, may have been suitable for the Apostles who were destined to receive the fuller knowledge of the Spirit; but not for those who having received the testimony of the Apostles and the Spirit are spared the need for additional research.⁽³⁾ There can be no vague seeking for what has been taught as one unique and definite thing. You must, no doubt, "seek" until you find, and believe when you have found. Thereafter you have nothing else to do but to keep what you have believed, provided you believe this also, that there is nothing else to be believed, and therefore, nothing else to be sought. - "Certain people need to be reminded that what they should have sought is how to avoid interpreting 'Seek, and ye shall find,' without regard to the rule of reason."⁽⁴⁾ If we must go on seeking so long as we are able to find anything, two things are obvious: either (a) We do not yet believe, because we have not yet found what we seek or (b) having found what is sought we have ceased to believe in it.

(1) De Praes. Haer., IV; 6(ii): 1 Thess., V; 21.

(2) Matt. VII; 7, Luke XI; 9.

(3) De Praes. Haer., VIII; 11(ii).

(4) De Praes. Haer., IX; 12(ii). The Rule of Reason comprises three main points, viz: (1) MATTER, (2) TIME, (3) LIMIT, i.e., WHAT? - WHEN? - HOW LONG? The boundary-line is the Lord's desire that one believe nothing else than what He has taught, or even seek for it. Vide De Praes. Haer., X; 13(ii) and cf. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian, p. 221. Reason, according to the latter's interpretation, is permissible only within the Rule of Faith, i.e. the Regula. The Paraclete is similarly limited, though his deliverances are conclusive.

Once for all, I would say," Tertullian sums up, "No man seeks except him who has never possessed, or else has lost what he sought." (1)

Such seekers have no fixed tenets, and lacking these do not believe, and, therefore, are not Christians. (2) Questions about creation are incapable of being found out or investigated except by God alone... (3) "Let such curious art give place to faith; let such glory give way to salvation." (4) As for professing Christians, let their seeking confine itself strictly to what lies in their own field; let them follow after only that which can become an object of enquiry without impairing the Rule of Faith. (5) Where, anyway, is the necessity for such intellectual curiosity when the most ordinary man has access to the essential knowledge of God? With sanguine assurance Tertullian declares, "There is not a Christian workman but finds out God, and manifests Him and, hence, assigns to Him all those attributes which go to constitute a divine being, though Plato affirms that it is far from easy to discover the Maker of the universe; and, when He is found, it is difficult to make Him known to all." (6) God is, of course, such that He never can be fully apprehended by the human intellect. He ought to be worshipped rather than judged, served reverently rather than handled critically..."The true name of God is

(1) De Praes. Haer., XI; 15(ii).

(2) De Praes. Haer., XIV; 18(ii).

(3) The wisdom of God in creation is "not to be gauged by the [writings of] philosophers", but... learnt from the [words of] prophets - from Wisdom, God's counsellor (Adv. Herm., XVIII; 79-80(ii)). The only real "school" for Christians is "the school of Heaven" which "denies the gods of this world". (De An., I; 412(ii).)

(4) De Praes. Haer., XIV; 18(ii). "To know nothing in opposition to the rule of faith is to know all things."

(5) Ibid.

(6) Apol., 46; 129(1).

greatness, and this, if it could have been known to man in every possible respect, would have lost its significance." It is better, Tertullian advises us, to remain in ignorance, lest we should come to know what we ought not to know. You have after all acquired the knowledge of what you ought to know.⁽¹⁾ The ordinary man may be in error, but he is better off for erring simply than the physical philosopher who errs speculatively.⁽²⁾ The man who has the fear of God, even though ignorant of all else, will, provided he has attained to the knowledge and truth of God, possess full and perfect wisdom;⁽³⁾ and, so far as concerns revelation, it is really better for Christians to be in ignorance of something because God has not revealed it, than to know it according to human wisdom because man has been bold enough to assume it.⁽⁴⁾ "I praise the faith," says Tertullian fervently, "which has believed in the duty of complying with the rule, before it has learnt the reason of it."⁽⁵⁾ Baptism, for instance, is the more to be believed, if the wonderfulness be the reason why it is not believed. "We also ourselves wonder, but it is because we believe."⁽⁶⁾

(1) De Praes. Haer., XIV; 17(ii).

(2) Ad Nat., II:VI; 477(i).

(3) Ad Nat., II:II; 466(i).

(4) De An., I; 413(ii).

(5) De Cor., 2; 335(i).

(6) De Bapt., II; 232(i). The argument is reducible to a simple formula:

There is no truth without God.

There is no access to God without Christ.

There is no exploration of ~~God~~^{Christ} without the Holy Spirit.

There is no attainment to the latter except by the mysterious gift of faith (fidelis sacramento): De An., I; 412(ii).

The ministry of the Word does not seem to figure here; but elsewhere Tertullian assigns it a central place. The soul's salvation is "endangered not by its being ignorant of itself, but of the word of God". (De Car. Chr., XII; 191(ii).)

V. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

Of all the personalities who stand out in the first three centuries of the Church's history, Tertullian is in some ways the most impressive, and, at the same time, the most perplexing. At first glance he would seem to be as free of complications as the position he defends. Here was a man, one might say, who with transparent vision saw into the soul of paganism in all its shapes and forms, drew an impassable dividing-line between the essential teaching of the Church (as he conceived it) and the ideals of the outside world, and thereafter dedicated his whole life and all his powers to fighting the fight of faith on this uncompromising ground. When, however, we begin to look more closely at the matter and the man who meets our gaze, the picture tends to change. The outlines are no longer so clear-cut as we imagined; the colours blend into each other and become now and then confused, till we begin to sense a certain dualism in Tertullian's own mind and character. The two worlds which he sets in juxtaposition are not simply just opposed. They rather meet and merge in him. He is largely the embodiment of the problem which he wrestles with so uncompromisingly, the incarnation of a paradox we encounter in his writings and find there not always, if, indeed, ever reconciled.

The main question, then as now, was, Greenslade⁽¹⁾ reminds us, "What is essential Christianity?" The answer to such a question, as we have seen, for Harnack, is quite clear and definite. Essential Christianity was and remains the pure deposit of the Faith after the

(1) Library of Christian Classics (Early Latin Theology), Vol. V, p. 25.

latter has been purged of every trace of its dilution with pagan philosophy, which, in Harnack's view, constituted the chief brand-mark of heresy.⁽¹⁾ This position is tenable, for what it is worth, so long as heresy is accepted as the blending of orthodoxy and Greek philosophy per se. Recent re-examination of the data does not, however, seem to yield unqualified support for this long-held point of view. Turner's contention is that some of the heresies fall below the level of philosophic thought. Temperamental and psychological human reactions often are, he argues, the mainsprings of heretical beliefs. The heretics might use some or any of the "bridge words", common in current philosophic thought, without being really very interested or much involved in the philosophies concerned.⁽²⁾

According to Harnack (to state it otherwise), the retreat from essential Christianity arises out of the introduction of an entirely new element into the originally given situation. The message appears now "clothed with a knowledge of the world, and of the ground of the world which had already been obtained without reference to it". Religion becomes a doctrine having its certainty from the Gospel, but only in part derives its content from it.⁽³⁾ The religion of the spirit is replaced by "increasingly articulated forms of Christian

(1) Vide Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 7.

(2) Turner (*op.cit.*, pp. 221-222) adds that the heresies were not so much a philosophic interpretation of Christianity as has commonly been supposed. The process hitherto assumed as active in producing heresy was rather, in the writer's view, simply, "the conversion of logic into logistics" (*op.cit.*, pp. 230-231). Important features of heretical thought have some rootage, he admits, however, in the later works of Plato, and may be regarded as of Platonist, even if not of Platonic origin (*op.cit.*, p. 223). This may account for Tertullian's occasional opposition to Platonism, despite his equally occasional agreement with Platonic sentiment.

(3) Turner, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

officialdom, misdirected" into secular (mainly philosophic) channels.⁽¹⁾ Turner's retort is that this alleged obscuration of the Gospel by its confusion with extraneous elements is really "the elucidation of its unique subject-matter" in the light of its general setting in the contemporary world.⁽²⁾ Besides, as he goes on to indicate, the Gospel was not simply acted on itself; it acted on Hellenism and Gnosis in its turn.⁽³⁾

Harnack, again, regards Montanism as the surviving remnant of the Church's struggle to salvage chiliasm (for Harnack and his school an important primitive element), from the general debacle (as he interprets it). In the struggle between Montanism and Orthodoxy, he considers chiliasm to have been the principal casualty.⁽⁴⁾ But, Turner comments again, pictorial representations of the latter end could not long survive the impact of metaphysics on theology... "Finality," he says, "was bound to appear differently to a Papias and an Origen."⁽⁵⁾

Harnack, in fact, makes a considerable concession, notwithstanding what he has just said, in declaring that Tertullian's intention was "to unite the enthusiasm of primitive Christianity with intelligent thought".⁽⁶⁾ The meaning of this, however, hangs obviously upon how

(1) Op.cit., p. 19.

(2) Op.cit., p. 18. Turner makes yet another useful point when he suggests that the hellenization of Christianity (such as it may have been) was political and social, rather than theological. In any case, Christianity's transcendence of the best contemporary human categories proves, he asserts, the uniqueness of its subject-matter in the total situation. (Op.cit., pp. 461-462.)

(3) Op.cit., p. 24.

(4) In this Werner agrees with him (Turner, pp. 20-22). But for Harnack orthodoxy does not mean the same thing in every context. When it resists philosophy it is good, when it opposes Montanism it is bad!

(5) Turner, op.cit., p. 131.

(6) Article, Tertullian, Encycl. Britt.

the phrase "intelligent thought" is meant to be construed.

All efforts to uphold the "Galilean Gospel" thesis must and generally do ignore early attempts even in the New Testament to make use of Greek thought "for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel", without essential Christianity's being deeply influenced thereby.⁽¹⁾ St. Paul's endeavour to apply this method is a conspicuous case in point, but the Apostle's philosophic terminology, as Turner has affirmed, is simply the appropriation of "'numinous expressions', perhaps even bridge words, with little regard for what lay on the other side".⁽²⁾ Harnack's reading of the facts fails at the same time to do justice to the central problems facing the early Church, problems the latter was challenged unceasingly to tackle, and which, for the survival of her very life, she had eventually to solve. The members of the Church were at the mercy of those who with ridicule and satire, no less than with dialectic skill, could reduce to absurdity the "fables" and "simple notions" on which their faith (as the critics held) was based.⁽³⁾ The Church's answer was to show that the "fables" referred to could be proved for historic facts, the "simple notions" shown to be the highest revelation of a rational God to his rationally-endowed creatures, the simple faith being, on this showing, the very wisdom of God.⁽⁴⁾ Tertullian can be credited with having done his honest share to uphold

(1) Turner, op.cit., p. 414. cf. Acts, James and Hebrews for instances.

(2) Turner, op.cit., p. 233.

(3) "Philosophers and heretics," Tertullian himself informs us, "and the very heathen laugh and jeer" at mention of the idea of the Virgin Birth. (Adv. Marc., V: XIX; 472).

(4) The Theology of Tertullian, p. 240. The problem was, in fact, much the same as for Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

this line of argument.⁽¹⁾ Harnack has admitted that Christian learning during this period attracted the educated class to Christianity, providing serious rivals to the neo-Platonist philosophers, particularly in the East. The "authority and stability" of the Church were, he says, more attractive to the upper classes in the West.⁽²⁾ But there is no better representative of the Church's learned tradition, no stouter champion of its authority and stability than Tertullian himself whose writings must have aroused the interest and enlisted the allegiance of the reading, thinking people of his day.

There were, then as now, among Church-leaders, two distinguishable schools of thought, one rigorist in attitude, the other more open to liberal ideas. The latter was convinced that any *modus vivendi* between the Church and the Gentile world was, so long as it persisted, a means of spreading the Faith. Tertullian would by most people be included with the former school of thought. It is commonly assumed that he devoted all his energies to preserving simple faith from contamination by philosophy, and protecting the pristine purity of the primitive Kerygma.⁽³⁾ Greenslade, however, blames him for fathering the pessimistic doctrine of the Fall which became prominent in the West, and says that this was the consequence of his breaking away from,

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- (1) Vide Roberts, *op.cit.*, p. 235. He presents, we are told, "a rational view of the universe as understood by Christians". cf. Shortt, *The Influence of Philosophy on the Mind of Tertullian*, p. 47.
- (2) *Mission*, ii, p. 42.
- (3) He is alleged to be against "the speculative tendency" in which, according to Neander, the Gnostic attitude consists. "The unyielding powerful exhibition of what was peculiarly Christian, with an unceremonious rejection of all foreign ingredients...forms the marked distinction of Tertullian's spirit", this writer testifies, yet admits at the same time that this "disturbed and obscured his conception of Christianity". (*Antignostikus*, p. 200.)

instead of holding fast by his Greek masters,⁽¹⁾ who are the real cause of the trouble, according to Harnack's estimate.

Nevertheless, he reveals, as we have seen, considerable grasp of speculative principles enabling him to oppose and to refute the Gnostics. The realization of this circumstance has been all too frequently obscured because of the ambivalence in Tertullian between Greek thought and Roman law. The fact remains that, despite his avowed detestation of eclectic philosophy, he was actually something of an eclectic philosopher himself, drawing from Scripture, and tradition, and philosophy whatever blended with his background or chimed with his own thoughts. "He sets one philosophy against another, and in his ability to select from them the points he is anxious to refute is clearly seen his knowledge of their ideas."⁽²⁾ This is all the more remarkable considering that such knowledge tended to lag behind in the Christian West.⁽³⁾

"He did not like philosophy," says Greenslade, yet could not, the latter recognizes, quite get rid of his inherited Stoicism. For him, philosophy may have gone astray in purposeless search, but he can keep step with the philosophers just the same, using as well as abusing his

(1) Op.cit., p. 23.

(2) Shortt, op.cit., pp. 13-14.

(3) While the main philosophies might be less well-known in the West, the influence of Stoicism was decidedly marked there. Through the philosophical works of Cicero and Seneca, Stoicism was deeply embedded in the culture in which Fathers like Minucius Felix and Tertullian were reared. The impact of this philosophic fashion on the latter cannot be doubted, though the exact extent of his knowledge is difficult to assess. Philosophical dictionaries were very widely used, and what Turner describes as the "magisterial study of Waszink" is claimed to have established the close dependence of the whole of the *De Anima* on doxographical material. (Tertulliani de Anima, J.H. Waszink, pp. 21-47; *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 449.)

opponents. He can investigate and discuss philosophic problems. He even admits a certain area of agreement between such things and Christianity which proves that the subjects dealt with, at least, interested him. Indeed, he regards the pagan thinkers because they attacked polytheism as inspired by the spirit of truth.⁽¹⁾ What, it appears, he simply could not tolerate was any attempt to explain Christianity by the tenets they professed, and the fact that they and the heretics more or less covered the same ground; but we must be careful as to what conclusions we feel warranted in drawing from any statement either made by him or made concerning him, for on numerous occasions he simply contradicts himself.⁽²⁾

Thanks to the simplicity of God's truth, "so opposed to the subtlety and vain deceit of philosophy", he declares, "we cannot possibly have any relish for such perverse opinions"⁽³⁾..."What, indeed,

- (1) Categorical statements such as that made by Roberts (The Theology of Tertullian, p. 122), to the effect that Tertullian preferred the "Good God" of the mob to the exalted theism of the philosophers fail to do justice to the facts.
- (2) Examples of these are frequent. For instance, in transferring the seat of ecclesiastical authority from the Church visible to the Church invisible, Tertullian undermined what he had spent twenty-five years of his life to defend and justify. Again, it is, on the one hand, permissible to flee in time of persecution (Ad Uxor) and, on the other, it is strictly prohibited (De Fuga). The modern-sounding paradox of nature and grace is echoed in him as well, despite his insistence on the unity of revealed and natural knowledge (Vide Adv. Marc., V:XVII; 460, De An., XXI; 461(ii) and IX; 427(ii)). His treatise on Fasting strikes one as a strange reversal of his argument against Marcion in which he commends all things as good. Like his fellow-African and ardent admirer, St. Cyprian, Tertullian in a similar situation changes his ground from Tradition to Reason, the very ground he had so roughly handled in the Apology. "Here," remarks Turner, "speaks the ci-devant lawyer applying not for the first time the principles of Roman law to his theology. Rarely can a theologian have laboured so hard to demolish his own prepared positions." (The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 314 and context.)
- (3) Adv. Marc., V:XIX; 472-473.

has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"⁽¹⁾ he scornfully demands; "yet," Turner observes in this connection, "the advocate of Solomon's Porch is not elsewhere exempt from the influence of that other Stoa." Even the *De Anima*, most learned of his writings, opens in similar vein, with a vigorous expostulation against "trying to discover more than can be learned from God", yet, comments Turner, "After this unpromising exordium, he proceeds to examine the state of the question among the philosophers with considerable learning and ability."⁽²⁾ In the same work there is a passage⁽³⁾ dealing with the different schools of thought where Tertullian grades the philosophers on a preferential scale (the schools in question may be classified according to either their origins or their aims, an objective enough judgment), but he proceeds to label the various founders of these schools..."the dignity of Plato, the vigour of Zeno, the even-mindedness of Aristotle, the stupidity of Epicurus, the sadness of Heracleitus, the madness of Empedocles", approving of those who appeal to him and disapproving of the rest. The Christians, he says elsewhere by way of further concession, are challenged by the heresies to use their rhetoric no less than their philosophy,⁽⁴⁾ a plain admission that not only must the Christian know something of philosophy, but that he must philosophize. His mantle, Tertullian proclaims, has had conferred on it the fellowship of a divine sect and discipline. "Joy," he exclaims, "O, mantle, and exult! A better philosophy has now deigned to honour thee..."⁽⁵⁾

(1) *De Praes. Haer.*, VII; 9(ii).

(2) *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, pp. 407-408.

(3) *III*; 417(ii).

(4) *De Res. Car.*, V; 223(ii). We must, adds Tertullian, follow the plain evidence from our opponents when the latter have nothing to gain from it.

(5) *De Pall.*, VI; 200(iii).

"Christianity is for him, in short, the final philosophy.

The same paradoxical impression is produced upon the reader from a study of Tertullian's avowed attitude and his actual relation to Greek cultural institutions (other than philosophy as such). The whole apparatus of contemporary social life is, he appears to say, the *bête noire* of the Church. This castigation of the civilized environment of his age is not, however, as one might readily conclude, the final dismissal of Hellenism, for in order to show apart from anything else that Christianity is the fullest revelation of the truth, he was under the necessity of mastering the very culture he condemns, which amounts in practice to the admission that Christianity cannot entirely contract out of the cultural life of man.

With a view to safeguarding the integrity (as he believed) of human sense experience, he quotes as proof of the latter's wholesome influence the culture, and civilized accomplishments derived from the sense-impressions..."so many arts, so many industrious resources, so many pursuits, such business...such commerce...such counsels, consolations," etc....all of which have produced the very relish and savour of human life.⁽¹⁾ Further, in order to support the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh, he argues that the latter is the medium for the procreation of the arts, "the mind's pursuits and powers; all work and business...the living acts of the soul," etc. If, goes the argument, the flesh sustains these desirable forms of life on earth, what reason is there to eliminate the flesh's role from the eternal life of heaven?⁽²⁾

(1) De An., XVII; 448(ii).

(2) De Res. Carn., VII; 229(ii). The senses are, besides, the stamp of man's rationality, his intelligence and knowledge, so the latter, by argument, must be good as well. (De An., XVII; 448(ii).)

Besides, the virtues which the Christian extols and seeks to emulate are not produced on soil foreign to the cultivated life. Modesty, for instance, is "the flower of manners...the pre-indication of every good disposition...rare...not easily perfected, but tenuous of life, if nature, training and self-discipline play their part. Modesty, like every mental good quality, is the result of birth, or training, or compulsion"⁽¹⁾ (which, one observes, are all the fruits, more or less, of a cultured or civilized environment). "Let philosophy now see to the question of her own profitableness," declares Tertullian, "for she is not the only associate whom I boast." There are other things involved, and in this sense we might almost say invoked. "From my store," he continues, "are clothed the first teacher of the form of letters, the first explainer of their sounds, the first trainer in the rudiments of arithmetic, the grammarian, the rhetorician, the sophist, the medical man, the poet, the musical time-beater, the astrologer and the bird-gazer." All that is liberal in studies is included with these things.⁽²⁾ He even deplores neglect of study and the resultant lapse in discipline.⁽³⁾ As to the influence of such training on the soul, the latter's substance is not benefitted, yet its conduct and discipline are. Such "aliment" contributes nothing to the soul's bulk, but it adds to its store of grace.⁽⁴⁾ No one, he reassures us, is asserting that the adjuncts of life and the contents of creation are unconditionally bad, for nobody is ^{denying} ~~claiming~~ what everybody knows and Nature teaches herself, "that God is the Maker of the universe and that it is good,

(1) De Pud., I; 56(iii).

(2) De Pall., VI; 200(iii).

(3) De Pud., I; 56(iii).

(4) De An., VI; 423(ii).

and that it is man's by free gift from its Maker".⁽¹⁾ Marriage is not condemned, for instance, because God bestowed His blessing on it...as He did, indeed, on the whole of His creation for wholesome and good uses. Nor is cultured living condemned either were it freed of the excesses attending the wardrobe and the table. There is, let us remember, a regulative principle.⁽²⁾ Christ did not come in the flesh to bring "boors and savages by the dread of multitudinous gods into some civilization" but "to enlighten men, already civilized, and under illusions from their very culture, that they might come to the knowledge of the truth".⁽³⁾ This representation of the Christ, however, as Enlightener and Liberator transcending paganism is not the iconoclastic figure we should naturally expect from some of Tertullian's more brusque expressions of sentiment on such things.

Again, according to his own most unambiguous declarations on the subject, he is opposed to heathen literature,⁽⁴⁾ yet he concedes the necessity of turning to that literature for apologetic purposes, and calculates that "the little of this"⁽⁵⁾ he has acquired will be enough.

(1) De Spect., 2;9(i).

(2) Adv. Marc., I:XXIX; 56-57. The tree is not cut down, the corn reaped as implying their condemnation; it is just that their time has come. Contrast this with the extremism of his Montanist period.

(3) Apol., 21;96(i). Christians, he submits, should be labelled enemies of human error, rather than enemies of mankind.(Apol., 37; 117(i).)

(4) Laistner, p. 50, quotes the Didascalia Apostolorum XII for the purist attitude to pagan literature. "Avoid all heathen books... You want history? There is the Book of Kings. Philosophy and Wisdom? The Prophets. Songs? The Psalms of David. Cosmogony? The Genesis of Moses. Laws? The glorious law of God." The prescriptive nature of the regulation does, however, indicate what Christians seemed to want, or for which they felt a need.

(5) De Cor., 7;341(i). In the Ad Mart., IV; 5f(i) and the De An., XLVI; 513ff(ii) he reveals enough of his acquaintance with pagan literature to make him in this case suspect of false modesty..."the entire literature of the age"...Hermippus of Berytus in five portly volumes," etc. cf. De An., XLVI; 516(ii).

"After all," he argues with himself, "things belonging to the heathen must be proved from their own documents." This strikes one as reminiscent of pagan literary fashions in the second and third centuries. The rhetors abused the philosophers, and the philosophers the rhetors, but it was mostly word-play with little serious intent. Churchmen, for their part, were little different. The stock anathemas against reading pagan literature became with them the tritest common-places, for, as Christian controversialists perfectly well knew, simple piety by itself was not enough, because one must be able to confute the enemies of Christianity by reasoned argument.

Very different from Tertullian's direct onslaught on the intellectually-inclined are his "asides" on those who irritated him because, apparently, devoid of intellectual ability. Near the beginning of the *De Resurrectione Carnis*, he complains that many persons in the Church are devoid of education, still more are of faltering faith, and several are weak of mind.⁽¹⁾ The uneducated, linked here with "perversely-disposed" people, are hinted at as taking wrong meanings out of words. The simple, indeed, constituting the majority of believers, are, it appears, startled at the mere mention of the three-in-one and one-in-three as savouring of pagan polytheism which the Rule of Faith forbids.⁽²⁾ Then, there are those who, "content with having simply believed, without full examination of the grounds of the traditions, carry in their mind, through ignorance, an untried and merely probable faith".⁽³⁾ The true Christian brothers, on the other

(1) *De Res. Carn.*, II; 219(ii).

(2) *Ibid.* Even common-sense views, observes Tertullian, renew the trepidations of the falterers and weak-minded. (*De Res. Car.*, V; 223(ii).)

(3) *De Bapt.*, I; 231(i). Many of these, we are informed, had been carried away by the viper of the Cainite heresy striking at Christian baptism.

hand, are they "who from the same womb of a common ignorance have agonized into the same light of truth".⁽¹⁾ It is the real Tertullian who speaks also when, in honest self-confession, he declares, "I, who am to some degree a new disciple...can believe nothing, except that nothing ought to be believed hastily (and that, I may further say, is hastily believed, which is believed without any examination (agnitione) of its beginning)".⁽²⁾

The vagaries we have noted here in passing may be due mainly to the fact that his knowledge, however versatile, was randomly accumulated and largely unorganized, or to his changed and changing outlook from the first days of his new-found faith to his final identification with the school of Montanus.

What bearing on this question has Tertullian's relation to the main current of the orthodox tradition? This can be ascertained, in part from the literary sources he employed. Alongside the Scriptures, there is evidence of the solid debt he owes to Hermès, Tatian, Miltiades, Melito, Proculus, Justin, Athenagoras, and Irenaeus, the last two especially, the last-named most of all,⁽³⁾ and this fact alone carries the implication of strong influence from the school of Asia Minor.⁽⁴⁾ In general he follows in the footsteps of the Greek apologists, though held by some to be in certain respects less profound or original.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Apol., 39:119(i).

(2) Adv. Marc., V:I; 369.

(3) Shortt says his debt here is factual rather than phraseological, but that makes it all the more weighty, from the point of view of influence (op.cit., p. 27).

(4) Vide Shortt, p. 100. The emphasis on the Paraclete is strongly suggestive of Johannine influence (cf. De Jej., XII; 144(iii)). This was the main idea borrowed, thinks Shortt, from Montanism which had itself links with the Christianity of the East. There is also a faint suspicion that the introduction of this conception may have helped to give rise to the Trinitarian formula, already sensed in Tertullian.

(5) The doctrine of the *λογος προφορικος* or Proceeding in Creation was equally /

If there is any validity in the argument that mere utilization of the Greek language made absorption of or influence by the corresponding Greek thought-forms unavoidable, Tertullian cannot be exempted from the rule. Though his Greek writings are now lost, he both wrote and spoke in Greek, this being in the beginning the main linguistic bridge between the Church and the Gentile world. He was besides the first ever to express the Gospel, already once removed from its original, in the common Latin tongue. He had in consequence "to invent many new terms and to employ novel methods of expression" in order to convey to his readers new thoughts and ideas with which his own mind was so fully charged. This raises a most interesting, if not quite vital point where our enquiry is concerned. Was Tertullian, in fact, the master-formulator he is widely claimed to be? Was he in any studied way the father of the Latin terminology and theology that have passed into the heritage of Western Christendom or was he simply endeavouring to do in a Latin medium what Paul and those who essayed with him the evangelization of the Roman empire outside of Africa had tried to do in Greek?⁽¹⁾

(5) continued from previous page:

equally attractive to early Christian theologians, themselves well-trained in philosophy, and anxious to expound the faith in terms agreeable to men whose education had included, as a necessary subject, the main principles of Stoicism, Platonism, Epicureanism and the other chief schools (Shortt, op.cit., pp. 55-56). Tertullian is held to reciprocate "the conception of the Greek Apologists as regards the essence of Christianity, viewed as philosophy and revelation"..."the natural expression of the conviction that Christian truth contains the completion and guarantee of philosophic knowledge". Vide Roberts, p. 99 et passim; Shortt, p. 104. Comparative weaknesses are claimed to be his allowing the revealed character of the Faith to fade more into the background, and possibly his greater inflexibility.

(1) Tertullian is, according to Shortt, "the first successor of St. Paul, who laid the foundation of Christian doctrine"..."the great pioneer of Western Christianity"..."founder of the great African school of Christian apologists" (op.cit., p. 10). He is further acclaimed as the creator of Latin Christian literature and architect of "orthodox anthropology and soteriology, the teacher of Cyprian and forerunner of Augustine" (op.cit., p. 100).

There is Paul looking around for "bridge words" in the latter, and making use of them to "get" his ideas "across", and here is Tertullian employing an exactly similar technique, but in that Latin medium which later, in the West, was, largely through him, to supplant Greek as the common coin of religious and cultural exchange. How far did this simply amount to carrying a stage further the initial process which began with the need for translating the Gospel from Aramaic into Greek? Is there not here the same, or an even greater risk of change in meaning and emphasis? Were 'justificare' or any of the other terms that later became technical specialities (and hardened gradually into dogmatic realities) intended originally as more than "bridge words" in Turner's sense? If Mommsen's theory is correct, the use of the provincialisms referred to simply represent an effort on Tertullian's part to popularize the Gospel by translating it into terms of vernacular terminology. He was, if this be so, no less innocent of what Harnack considers the unpardonable offence, the transformation of essential Christianity, than were the writers of the New Testament. His "formulae" may never have been meant for what Christians have subsequently appeared to see in them.⁽¹⁾ That they actually did is yet another of those paradoxes⁽²⁾

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- (1) Bishop Bull makes an interesting comment here. "But what, I pray you, does the Latin expression unius substantiae denote, but the same as the Greek ὁμοουσιος? Nor have I any doubt that Tertullian, as he almost everywhere studiously imitates the Greek ecclesiastical writers (as learned men are well aware), so here also translated the word ὁμοουσιος - which he had found used with respect to the most holy Trinity, in writers of that class, of earlier date than himself - by the words of his mother tongue, unius substantiae." (*Defensio Fidei Nicaenae*, Vol. I, p. 64.) Biggs thinks that the term 'substantia' "came to Tertullian not from the lawyer but from the philosopher". (*The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 205.)
- (2) One intriguing paradox is suggested by Laistner's theory that the Creeds originated with the early Church's need to cope with the illiterate. He quotes Cyril of Jerusalem writing in 348 A.D., "For since all cannot read the Scriptures, some being hindered as to the knowledge of them by want of learning, and others by want of leisure, in order that the soul may not perish from ignorance, we comprise the /

to which reference has been made. How came it that the man who (so it is commonly believed) hardened his face against the wisdom of the world, the learned language of the savant, and theologizing in general, becomes the figurehead of those very tendencies in the later catholic Church? Again, one is tempted to draw some hard and fast conclusion only to be drawn up by the recollection of the man. He could not, as has been not untruly said, resist the pleasure of a well-turned counter-formula presenting his opponents with a conclusion the very opposite of their own. It is the lawyer, rather than the philosopher, we see in action here, and a lawyer who was much given to rhetorical display. How far, one wonders, was the famous "quia absurdum" one such mere flash of rhetoric - or is it, as Turner says, that "the tension between form and content in Christian theology appears to be inevitable? The evidence suggests," he remarks, "that the Church was aware of it, and provided adequate safeguards against its worst effects." The orthodox attitude is here stated to have been the proclamation of the primacy of Scripture and steadfast adherence to Tradition, regarded as the witness of the Church's continuing life to the Biblical realities aided by human reason wherever admissible.⁽¹⁾

Despite his disconcerting vagaries, Tertullian is credited with helping to maintain the even balance of the early Church's faith. He was, Greenslade contends, "a major force in keeping the West steady and sensible, historical and Biblical against the much more fundamental per-⁽²⁾ versions of theosophical...and - premature - philosophical speculation."

(2) continued from previous page:

the whole doctrine of the faith in a few lines..." It would be ironic if the Creeds turned out to be a concession to the credulous, in the early Church, rather than the opposite, as has come to be supposed. Vide Laistner, op.cit., p. 29.

(1) Vide Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 463.

(2) The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. V, p. 24.

I V

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

"But he that speaks through books, consecrates himself before God, crying in writing thus: Not for gain, not for vainglory, not to be vanquished by partiality, nor enslaved by fear, nor elated by pleasure; but only to reap the salvation of those who read, which he does not at present participate in, but awaiting in expectation the recompence which will certainly be rendered by Him, who has promised to bestow on the labourers the reward that is meet."

Str. I: I; 354(i)

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I. THE BACKGROUND

Alexandria, when Clement saw it in the middle of the second century A.D.,⁽¹⁾ could still claim to be in many ways the embodiment and expression of its illustrious founder's dream. Alexander of Macedon was among the first to realize that the truly final battle is the battle for men's minds. To this end he planned on the most scientific lines the great metropolis called after him as the cradle of a new civilization and the birthplace of Hellenism.⁽²⁾

His military exploits had opened up the way to India. Thus, Alexandria became, in due course, the gateway to the Orient, and the ensuing flow of trade and commerce, Eastward and Westward, contributed to the mixed character of the city's populace. Foreign students found their way to the Museum (the University); and Pantaenus, the first known principal of the Catechetical School is said to have gone on a missionary journey to "India" in his time.⁽³⁾ Little wonder, then, that Clement takes such interest in non-Christian religions⁽⁴⁾ and exhibits generally such missionary zeal.

The Alexandrian Church maintained close links with the Church at Rome, but Rome and Alexandria had already been associated otherwise.

(1) Circa 180. Vide Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, p. 65.

(2) Glover in his World of the New Testament (p. 138) remarks that the pattern of town-planning popularized in the Hellenistic world is even discernible in John's description of the new Jerusalem of the Apocalypse... "and the city lieth foursquare" (Rev. XXI:16). Surrounded by magnificent and impressive buildings like the Serapaeum, the Gymnasium, the Stadium, the Hyppodrome, the Theatre and the royal palace, the Sema, tomb of Alexander, stood as the impressive and suggestive symbol of the dominant idea that still inspired them. (Cf. Tollinton, op.cit., i, p. 55.)

(3) Tollinton, op.cit., i, p.14.

(4) Vide Str., I:XV; 398-399(i).

Scholars and teachers moved with great freedom between these and other university centres of the Hellenistic world. There were strong ties of a politico-commercial character in Clement's day as well. "Corn in Egypt" from the time of Joseph and his brethren was fraught with meaning and not a little apprehension for Rome and her emperors.

Most noteworthy, however, was the city's contribution to the cause of human enlightenment. Her influence lives on in that respect and will continue to be felt, so long as men prize the aims and ideals of the spiritual and intellectual life. Under the Macedonian kings, she came to be a centre both of literary distinction and of philosophical renown. The historically significant translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, the vast work of Philo and his Jewish contemporaries, the famous library which contained the works of Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles (borrowed from Athens, or, more often, directly, from Athenians, we are told)⁽¹⁾ all testify to the fact. Bibliography and textual criticism originated here. The sciences were represented by such names as Aristarchus, the astronomer, Eratosthenes, the geographer, Euclid, the geometer, and Heron, the inventor whose influence still counts for something in the scientific world, while the medical school was famous in anatomy and surgery.⁽²⁾ Clement often

(1) An ingenious, if not exactly orthodox method seems to have been adopted for the stocking of the Library. Visitors coming from abroad to Alexandria had to surrender any books not registered in the library catalogues, particularly originals. Copies of the latter were returned to the, no doubt, vainly protesting tourists, duly receipted by the authorities.

The extensive classical collection helps to explain the numerous quotations from Greek writers with which Clement's works abound, though as an educated Greek himself he must have had considerable first-hand knowledge of these already before settling in Alexandria.

(2) Vide Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, p. 43.

must have thought the Pharos shining over the dark waters of the harbour entrance to be symbolic of the city's nobly conceived place and purpose, culturally speaking, in the Hellenistic world.

As one would expect of a great academic centre in the papyrus-growing belt, the book-trade flourished here as well. The latest volumes from the pen of Valentinus or Basilides were, one gathers, easily obtained,⁽¹⁾ and we can imagine Clement browsing of an afternoon through some of the numerous effusions of the "New Theology" which so annoyed the simple and sometimes tremulous believers in the Church.

Within the nexus of this vast experiment in the diffusion of Hellenism which Alexandria, as we have seen, was meant to be,⁽²⁾ were two important centres or forces of culture, not wholly identical with the experiment, nor exactly a part of it, yet oriented by its influence and touched by its ideals, namely, the Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria, and, alongside the latter, the Christian Catechetical School for whose essential character and creation Clement was largely responsible. Let us, in passing, glance at these two in turn.

The Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria

After the fall of Jerusalem, Alexandria had become a sort of earthly new Jerusalem. The Jews of Alexandria had grown away through

- (1) It was wide and effective circulation of such Gnostic literature that probably convinced Clement of the need to "go into print" himself. Harnack has shown that the literary opposition from the side of paganism generally was one of the grimmest warfares that the early Church was called upon to wage. (Mission, i, pp. 501-509.) One is led from this to the reflection that a somewhat similar situation on a much vaster scale today presents the same sort of challenge to the Church and calls for the same sort of response as energetically pursued.
- (2) The transmission of the heritage of Greek culture to the later Western world. (Vide Jaeger, Paideia, Book I.)

time from their ancestral roots in Palestine. Freedom from ancient ties and gradual accommodation to their new environment paved the way for the Hellenizing process that was destined to reach back ultimately to the Palestinian Jews themselves. The really decisive step was taken when the Jewish Scriptures (previously referred to) were translated into Greek.⁽¹⁾ Indications are not wanting of attempts to tone down for apologetic purposes linguistic usages and conceptions in the Hebrew original likely to prove offensive to non-Jews, though, on this score, Bigg maintains that evidences of accommodation may be traced much farther back into Jewish literature.⁽²⁾ It is, however, with our period that we find associated the main effort for the merging of Judaism and Hellenistic thought.⁽³⁾ Alexander dreamed of using Hellenistic culture, which was mostly literary, for the diffusion of his coveted ideal. (Is he not pictured bearing Homer about with him in a sort of Graecised version of the Ark of the Covenant wherever he went on his campaigns?) The Alexandrian Jews, similarly, made the fullest use of the resources of Hellenism, "spoiling the Egyptians" for the diffusion of Judaism. At Alexandria was a vast emporium not only

(1) Clement avers that the *raison d'être* of the Septuagint was Alexander the Great's desire to complete the famous library. (Str., I:XXII; 448(i).)

(2) Vide Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Lecture I.

(3) The Judaism of the Diaspora, according to Harnack, succeeded in preserving its existence by its utilization of three important factors in the total situation: (a) the Old Testament, (b) Greek philosophy, and (c) elements of truth in the non-Jewish religions, all of which were dynamically assimilated by Christianity. (Mission, I, pp. 9-23.)

"It was at Alexandria," says Deane in his *Prolegomena to the Book of Wisdom*, "that Philosophy first came in contact with Revelation...No place in all the world could be more appropriate than Alexandria for the comparison of the doctrines of various schools...It attracted to its shores all that was great and famous, learned and ambitious, in the East and West alike." (Op.cit., p. 8, cols. 1-2.)

of trade but of ideas, all part and parcel of the Jewish missionary technique which reached its peak in Philo, the dynamic inspiration in this marriage of convenience between the Jew and the Hellenist. He is to some extent, as well, the source of a great deal of the trouble encountered later by the thinkers of the Church, because he mediated much that passed into Gnosticism and Neo-platonism,⁽¹⁾ apart from his important contributions to the philosophy of religion, the Logos concept in particular which Clement later put to work in order to reach very much the same constituency as Philo had in mind, in order ultimately to bring the Jews⁽²⁾ themselves under the all-inclusive claim of Christ.

Some effort must be made to ascertain what the Logos was supposed to signify to the philosophically-minded in the second century. The evolution of the concept as it passed through Philo's hands is in itself an illustration of the Graeco-Hebraic synthesis on the more comprehensive scale. It also marks the working out of the idea up to the point where Clement took it over and recast it in the interests of Christianity. Let us proceed, therefore, to investigate how the idea took shape and evolved in Philo's thought.

He begins as we should expect with his own Hebrew heritage, in which the angels (Judaism's version of the Gnostic aeons) are represented as ruled over by the two great Archangels embodying respectively (a) the goodness and (b) the justice of God.⁽³⁾ The

(1) Philo's influence is remarked also in the Hermetic writings which throw so much light on religious life and thought throughout this period in the Graeco-Roman world. Cf. E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 161.

(2) Str., II:I; 1-2(ii).

(3) A bifurcation much exploited by the Gnostics in their teaching about the Demiurge, the lower God of Justice, incompatible with the higher God of Love. This is Marcion's *bête noire*. It also contributed to the Docetic theology.

former, it seems, has relative seniority and stands for the Memrah, or the Word of God in Scripture; the latter is meant to signify the Word as Lord personified, a title which Philo utilizes for the unutterable name.

The Hellenistically-minded Jews of Alexandria were not quite satisfied, however, with the duality of principles in the Godhead, thus conceived (a penchant for unity being characteristic of the Alexandrian school of thought). A still more general conception, comprehensive of these two, was felt by them to be desirable; but where was the requisite conception to be found? It was at this point that the Greek strain was introduced.

The Greek conception of the Logos looks, at first glance, wellnigh inexhaustible;⁽¹⁾ but generally the Logos signified, on the one hand, the uttered word, the reasoning mind, order or system and, on the other, the world-spirit of the Stoics, the immanent and sustaining reason of the visible universe. It is, in addition, the conception of the Good, as found in the Platonic brand of Greek transcendentalism.

But where was the operative link between all this and the thought-forms of Hebraism? It was in Platonism, the Platonic "ideas", in particular, that Philo found the clue. He simply identified the latter with the angels, throwing in, for good measure, further Hebrew ingredients such as the Ten Words of creation, Hokmah, the Shekinah, the Heavenly Man, the great High Priest, etc. The final fusion of all these ingredients is the Philonic Logos, the Viceregent of God, the Mediator between the eternal and the temporal, the Powers that minister

(1) For a very full treatment vide C.H. Dodd, The Fourth Gospel. Bigg's Christian Platonists of Alexandria is extensively drawn upon for this whole section on the Philonic Logos.

betwixt God, the world and man.

In relation to God the Logos is Wisdom (as conceived in The Wisdom of Solomon),⁽¹⁾ God's Assessor, the Idea of ideas, the sum of all God's thoughts, His mind moving beyond Him, so as to carry out His will, the Glory of God, the eldest, first-born Son, the Monad,⁽²⁾ even a sort of secondary person in the Godhead. In relation to the Powers the Logos

- (1) Mention of this draws attention to a class of literature dedicated to the fusion of Greek and Hebrew categories of thought, the so-called Apocrypha which were at first preserved by the Jews of Alexandria and later by the Christians who also translated them. We find amongst these hybrid compositions, just prior to the advent of Christianity, the Book of Wisdom, Part II of which is strongly redolent of the Alexandrian philosophical point of view. The author has read widely, it appears, in Greek speculative literature and there is evidence of the acceptance of Hellenistic trends of thought. Jewish concern with the Gentiles seems to stop, however, with gleaning from their literature.

When we consider that "the Bible" of the early Church was for long the LXX along with certain other books not yet regarded as canonical (the idea of a New Testament canon not yet having gained acceptance) we can allow for the "liberties" which some of his modern critics accuse Clement of taking with Holy Writ. The Gospel of the Egyptians, we learn, was for a considerable time the main, official source in Alexandria for the life and teaching of our Lord.

- (2) This is the sort of idea which crops up in Clement's writings, but, of course, he probably inherited a number of important key-conceptions from the Philonic synthesis, the idea of Jesus, for example, as the Door through which the divine revelation makes its entrance into the world and into the life of man; of the soul's true food as enlightenment, the knowledge of God, imparted by the Word; of Christ as the great High Priest who undertakes for men; but, above all, the conception of the Son of God as the pre-existent Logos, the Architect of ultimate reality and, in a sense, the ultimate reality itself. Clement possibly reveals in some of the titles he attaches to the Logos acquaintance with Philo's thought. He is the Heavenly Shepherd, for example, the Saviour, Giver of Light divine. One senses an affinity with the Fourth Gospel which is reported to have had an Alexandrian origin, or, at least, if originating, as is more commonly supposed, at Ephesus, to have been brought thence to Alexandria at a very early date. Its so-thought Alexandrian characteristics, anti-Jewish sentiment, mistrust of the followers of John the Baptist, etc., have been cited as proof of its connection with Egyptian Christianity. The High Priestly role of Jesus is most conspicuous in the Epistle to the Hebrews which is also thought to be of Alexandrian extraction.

is Architect; in relation to the world, the great Archetypal Seal or Instrumental Cause, and, in relation, finally, to man, the Mediator. The Logos images the Creator, and man is the image of the Logos. It is a whole world of thought,⁽¹⁾ in fact, gathered up in a single word.

Down to the time of Clement, Philo stood, Bigg points out,⁽²⁾ between the Church and a clear understanding of the categories involved in Christian thought.⁽³⁾ Clement did not create the Logos idea, but had he not been instrumental in transmitting it, as he did, it might have been by-passed and its value as a dialectic symbol lost to Western posterity.

Philo, of course, acted as a carrier of Greek philosophy to a long succession of Church Fathers, Clement included.⁽⁴⁾ It has, indeed, been said that he provided the latter with a ready-made attitude to Greek philosophy, and a good deal of his working material. "How to reconcile Revelation and Philosophy - this was the task to which he (Philo) applied all the powers of his mind and all the stores of his learning. His great resource was allegory. In his hands the facts of history lost their reality and became only the embodiment of abstract truths,⁽⁵⁾ and the simple monotheism of Scripture was adapted to the

- (1) But, as E.F. Scott observes (The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 165), Philo's Logos is not abstract, not the Absolute of classical philosophy, but a personalized being, and the personal element is the dynamic Word by which in the Old Testament God effects His sovereign will.
- (2) The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, p. 26.
- (3) It was Clement's unique task to elaborate the implications of these categories for a scientifically thought-out Christian philosophy of religion. Cf. Harnack, Dogmen., ii, pp. 325-326.
- (4) Cf. Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 443.
- (5) Cf. Foakes-Jackson (History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, p. 127). For Philo the method was a most convenient way of circumventing some of the crudities in the Old Testament which would-be Gentile converts might regard as obstacles to accepting the Jewish faith. (Cf. E.F. Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 163.)

refinements of Greek science,"⁽¹⁾ especially, we might add, cosmology.⁽²⁾ This spiritualizing tendency is found in Clement, too. For him the Church is not a temple made with hands but the edifice of Gnostic piety,⁽³⁾ the true incense is the prayers,⁽⁴⁾ and the genuine altar is the worship of the elect people of God.⁽⁵⁾

But it must in justice be remembered that this spiritualizing bent is observable much earlier in the thinking of the Church. The writer of the Fourth Gospel spiritualizes much of what the Synoptists have to say; in the heaven of Revelation there is "no temple", and the Epistle to the Hebrews gives added emphasis to the belief which is expressed originally, according to Professor William Manson, in Stephen's speech in Acts,⁽⁶⁾ that God's truly chosen people ever moves out of the past into the future, on from the fixed forms of a traditional, moribund religious ritualism towards the religion of the spirit, of freedom and new life, which is the Exodus experience of the ancient Israel spiritualized in its application to the new Israel of God.⁽⁷⁾

The Catechetical School of Alexandria⁽⁸⁾

P.D. Scott-Moncrieff⁽⁹⁾ goes fairly fully into a question which in

(1) Vide Prolegomena to The Book of Wisdom (ed. Deane), p. 12, col. 1, and footnote 1.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Str., VII:V; 424ff.(ii).

(4) Str., VII:VI; 430(ii).

(5) Str., VII:VI; 428(ii).

(6) Acts, ch. VII. For the same tendency in the Fourth Gospel, vide C.H. Dodd.

(7) Vide passim W. Manson's Epistle to the Hebrews.

(8) E.F. Scott has ingeniously suggested that there is a veiled reference to the School in Acts, XVIII:24 where mention is made of "Apollon, an eloquent man from Alexandria, mighty in the Scriptures". The last phrase Scott equates with "skilled in the allegorical method". (Vide The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 166.)

(9) Paganism and Christianity in Egypt, pp. 1-37.

Clement is left pretty much to one side, namely, the part played by the common folk in Egypt in the spread of Christianity. The warnings against false teachers in the Didache at a somewhat later date are taken by this writer as convincing evidence that the "prophet", probably the itinerant Christian teacher may have been in the beginning the forerunner of the settled pattern of Christian life. One is tempted to speculate as to whether the Catechetical School grew from such humble origins. Clement teaching at home is reminiscent of St. Paul in his own hired house at Rome.⁽¹⁾ In any case, the teaching office was in operation prior to and, in some sense, independently of episcopal authority, an independence which appears still to have prevailed in Clement's case, in relation to the Church of Alexandria.⁽²⁾ Whether, in fact, the Catechetical School developed out of such humble origins we do not really know. Pantaenus, a converted Stoic teaching a Christian philosophy, is the first known principal, but by the time we come to him great strides have obviously been made, the institution being concerned almost exclusively with the educated world. This may, at times, have given rise to tension between the believing people and the somewhat advanced views for which the teaching institution stood.

Could Clement's apology for Greek culture be a defence of his own teaching curriculum? Did enquirers or cultured candidates for Church membership attend his lectures on the proper study and understanding of the Scriptures? Teaching, it seems, was mainly exegetical with ample opportunity for digression into topics of a speculative type,

(1) Acts, XXVIII:30.

(2) Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 329.

often in the manner of Pantaenus' "Expositions", now irrecoverable.⁽¹⁾

Other such institutions may have sprung up elsewhere in the Hellenistic world, but it is probably true to say that elsewhere there was nothing at this period at all comparable to the School of Alexandria⁽²⁾ which represents the first attempt to formulate the relationship between secular science and Christianity.⁽³⁾ This School and its tradition had existed in advance of Clement's day, a fact well worth remembering when the critics rise up to accuse him of deliberately and unprecedentedly secularizing the Church's Faith.⁽⁴⁾

There is another quite important aspect of the situation which we have to bear in mind. The Christian communities at the circumference of the early Church's life tended to lag behind "orthodox" developments elsewhere. The "orthodox" of whose existence the Alexandrian Christians remained long unaware, and the heretical (a designation

- (1) Cf. Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, p. 47. Bigg says that the training covered reasoning and exact observation, geometry, physiology, astronomy and philosophy, including all the theological poets and thinkers (except the Epicureans). (Vide The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, p. 42) which amounted to recognition of the partial truth of Hellenic wisdom along with its interpretation, apart from revelation. Turner contends that Clement is less concerned with Apostolic Tradition than with the deeper exploration of Christian truth per se which is distinctive of his whole teaching. (~~H.E.W. Turner~~, The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 330.)
- (2) Tollinton, op.cit., i, p. 329.
- (3) Clement according to Lietzmann gave the School a character which can be clearly and unambiguously expressed in the formula "a Christian gnosis of a consciously catholic type". (The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 277.)
- (4) Harnack in particular. Clement's attitude to the Greek science and culture taught in the Catechetical School was almost inherent in the role he succeeded to after Pantaenus. The schools so organized might almost be described as "denominational colleges at a secular university in which a determined effort was made to produce a synthesis of Greek learning with Christian revelation". Vide L. Millar, Christian Education in the First Four Centuries, pp. 26-27.

hardly so much as even heard of yet in Alexandria) mixed indiscriminately⁽¹⁾ till as late as Clement's day, and, anomalous as it may seem, the leading personalities in the Alexandrian Church of the second century were well-known Gnostics like Basilides or Valentinus⁽²⁾ or Theodotus, to name no more than these. As Harnack says in this connection, the school where Pantaenus and Clement after him taught the systematic wisdom and the Logos theology is proof that "...it was, indeed, possible to suppress heresy in the Church but not the impulse from which it sprang". Acceptance of tradition closely coupled with the urge to get behind it and beneath it to the underlying unity, the ultimate reason of things was valuable for both Christendom and the world at large then, as it is for both today. Did the Church in the generations subsequent to Clement arrest progress by allowing the dynamic Logos idea, so manifold in meaning and so pregnant with possibilities to drop more or less from sight? The course of theological development elsewhere in succeeding centuries runs increasingly to legalistic definition and terminological exactitude for the fixing,

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- (1) The undetermined nature of the body of scripture authorized for public teaching at this date made it easy for what would otherwise have been suspect ideology to insinuate itself through Gnostically-tinged writings like *The Gospel to the Egyptians*. (Vide Tollinton, op.cit., ii, p. 38.) Egypt, in any case, was, to quote Harnack, "the hotbed of religious frauds". (Mission, i, p. 132.) There were in Gnosticism the high levels represented by Valentinus and his like: but there were the lower levels where the weird sacramentalism of the Barbelo-Gnostics and the Pistis Sophia type of conception catered for the unreflecting multitude. The former is not unlike Freemasonry in some ways, while the latter is simply a variation on the pious hoaxes catering for the spiritually uprooted or dislodged in every age.
- (2) A native Egyptian, according to Epiphanius, in full communion with the Church in which he was allowed to teach his doctrines for a considerable time. H.E.W. Turner quotes Quispel's saying that he was "not a philosopher nor a theologian, but a visionary mystic who expressed his tragic conception of life in a symbol, of creative imagination" (*The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 116).

(which more and more came to mean the fixation) of belief. This later phase rests on an assumption that the world has challenged since to the detriment of the Faith and sometimes of faith itself, namely, that Christianity is reducible to precise terms of human thought or to a strict verbal formulation which once imposed upon it must thereafter be regarded as conclusive and, in a sense, infallible. Strange as it may appear, this is the direct consequence of the Church's real concern to protect faith in the Tradition against the assaults of reason or the over-liberalizing tendencies of the speculatively inclined who might desire, like Valentinus, to elaborate not only theologically but theosophically the data received on faith. The Church's answer is an ever more rigid circumscription of the data by the severest possible definition of the terms in which the latter are expressed, and one inevitable result of this has been that a man's faith can become assessable by measurement against the fixed, official formula which, in the end, is largely the product and expression of that very reason which the formula was originally created to control if not suppress. Bruno, despite his final philosophical position, that the universe is the realization of God's mind, is measured against the formula and burned with all due orthodox legality at the stake.

Retention of the Logos concept as a guiding principle might have equipped the Christian Church to steer clear of several pitfalls that were in time to beset her path, would undoubtedly have prepared her better for the changed and changing atmosphere of modern scientific thought, and for the challenge of new vistas waiting to be opened up in the spiritual and intellectual life of man. Only today has she come to realize in all its serious urgency the greatness of the gulf

that separates the traditional "Deposit" in matters of belief from the hitherto undreamed of realms of speculation and, conceivably, of being of which the best deposit can never fully take account. The so-called problem of communication in the twentieth century finds us largely unprepared, and strangely powerless to reanimate the credal forms we have inherited from the past so as to bridge the gulf or, at least, reduce the gap.

Clement these many centuries ago made a most valuable contribution towards the solution of this problem which is ours more or less today. That contribution may have light to throw upon the problem as we see it, and the solution that we seek.

II. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CLEMENT'S PROBLEM

(A) External

1. The Failure of Greek Philosophy

The very year that Clement came to Alexandria, Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic emperor, died.⁽¹⁾ Never had paganism had a greater opportunity than in his reign of moulding civilized society according to the philosophic heart's desire. The Wise Man of Stoic wishful thinking had, in reality, become King. Things did not, however, work out according to plan. The death of Aurelius proved for paganism the beginning of the end. The State religion fell thereafter into gradual decline, and the inevitable demise though considerably protracted came with the ban on the official philosophic schools enacted by Justinian in 529 A.D. So, philosophy had failed.⁽²⁾ Yet, as Tollinton reminds us, it had done the age a signal service in withdrawing from the cosmic vastnesses to concentrate on human conduct and on the soul of man. It had in so doing stressed demands and inner needs which, admittedly, it could not satisfy,⁽³⁾ the desire for some sure form of revelation, for the advent of a Saviour, and for immortality.⁽⁴⁾

The Greeks, as Paul has reminded us,⁽⁵⁾ sought after wisdom, and with what earnestness they sought it in the second century. Wisdom

(1) Vide Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, p. 65.

(2) Cf. E.F. Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 283.

(3) Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, pp. 81-82.

(4) Tollinton, op.cit., i, p. 83. Such commonly accepted ideas as the One God, Providence, human Freedom..."were ready to be purified and reset in any fresh embodiment which could present them with a new appeal and guarantee". (Op.cit., i, pp. 83-84.)

(5) 1 Cor., I:22.

at one time may have signified for them a sort of detached, academic attitude to life in general, but by Clement's day the Hellenistic man not only set a high value upon wisdom for its utilitarian self, he had for long believed in it as the Open Sesame to the issues out of life and death. The cry of the age, Reade strongly emphasizes, growing in intensity as the prevailing spiritual tension grew, was, "Where shall Wisdom be found?" That wisdom once found would furnish all the answers to life's questionings and the enigmas of existence was widely credited in that Hellenistic world. Ignorance was not just sin; it was the lostness of the soul. Deliverance was redemption, and the knowledge guaranteeing this was regarded as the proper business of "the knowing ones", the gnostically-endowed.

What were the perils and the dangers from which deliverance was sought? Mostly material conditions which, originally viewed as little more than limitations upon human life, had come under Persian dualistic influence to be thought of as positively evil. There was, again, that baneful influence on human destiny named by the Greeks Necessity in which the daemons played their malicious part. Redemption in this *mise en scène* was not conceived solely by reference to ethical considerations, and often not to these at all. Liberation from the cosmic doom that confined the human soul was the chief desideratum, and in this situation the alternatives put forward by the classical philosophies offered cold comfort at the best. Men and women found no satisfaction, either, in the prevailing paganism, though they put up with it.⁽¹⁾

The inarticulate religious longings of the multitude could not

(1) Tollinton, *op.cit.*, i, pp. 80-83.

forever be denied the sort of outlet offered for instance by the Mysteries.⁽¹⁾ The knowledge needed to free men and women from the iron grip of Fate must be knowledge from above, a revelation of the Supernatural, beyond the range of reason and the reach of human thought. The Gnostics, after their fashion, also catered for this widespread human need, from the low levels of popular magic to the giddy heights of mystic exaltation.

Through time the reaction of all this on the philosophers themselves seems to have been to throw them back on the clues offered by religion,⁽²⁾ resulting in their recognition of another than purely philosophical realm of truth, explicable in other than scientific terms, and of possible new avenues of knowledge⁽³⁾ or experience, such as illumination and ecstasy.⁽⁴⁾ Reade has contended that philosophy, in fact, failed because it tried to be religious.⁽⁵⁾ The action of Justinian in closing down the School of Plato signifies, this writer thinks, the choice Rome had by then resolved to make between the two major claimants for the vacant throne in the soul of imperial Rome.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Vide E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 114. Turner alleges a connection between the Gnostic sects in their organized forms and the Mysteries, the language peculiar to which is conspicuous in the Fathers of the Church. (Vide *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 149.)

(2):(5) Reade in his *Christian Challenge to Philosophy* argues that philosophy was doomed to failure because it made religious claims without being able to substantiate them, and lacked the necessary doctrinal equipment. The strength of Christianity lay in what philosophy did not have, along with the appropriation from philosophy of what it did not have itself. No religion, he adds, can hope to win, unless it meet the questionings of the human intellect; no intellectual system can succeed unless it offer some form of redemption and satisfy the longing of the weary souls of men.

(3) Like the humbler scientific attitude of the twentieth century.

(4) Cf. E.F. Scott, *op.cit.*, pp. 111-112. Philosophy had become the prime agent in the diffusion of the "religious mood".

(5) Reade, *The Christian Challenge to Philosophy*, p. 4.

The effort of the Schools to come down to the level of the masses was, in its way, admirable enough, but it was soon to become apparent that the philosophers themselves were, in the spiritual travail of their times, like blind guides leading the blind. It was reserved for Christianity to step into the breach. The Church had an answer to the questions to which the philosophers were incompetent to reply, if only she succeeded in expressing it in a terminology the age could understand. This was the vital aspect of the problem Clement found confronting him.

Despite the failure of its own peculiar aims, however, Greek philosophy had not failed, as we shall see, to leave its lasting impress on the thinking of the age. The contemporary world was dominated by the Greek rationalistic cast of thought. Every new opinion had to prove itself, we are told, on rationalistic grounds. Roman Law must justify its claims through the medium of Stoic philosophy,⁽¹⁾ and "Alexandria", says our informant, "had the ready-made answer to the Christian situation".⁽²⁾ It is doubtful whether before Clement we can say this conclusively in just so many words: but the habit of mind created by the activity of Philo was a factor which Clement could not reasonably overlook.

2. The Challenge of Syncretistic Paganism

The basic inadequacy of classical philosophy had long been

(1) Cf. E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 167.

(2) *Op.cit.*, p. 285. Jesus was presented as the answer to the profoundest questions about human existence the Greek philosophers had explored for centuries. Paul's object is, to a very large extent, the same in relation both to Judaism and Hellenism, and the Fourth Gospel illustrates the Alexandrian influence at work already on the orthodox Tradition.

evidenced by the many substitute philosophies, exotic cults, and mixed religious practices which had crept in to fill the vacuum in the religious consciousness at every level of contemporary society and in every walk of life. Universal ease of movement in the Hellenistic world meant not only speed in travel but increased facility in the inter-communication of ideas. Yet existence presented the appearance of an uneasy state of flux,⁽¹⁾ and, in such a situation, human thought tended to be in solution everywhere.⁽²⁾ It has been hinted that the intellectuals were rather satisfied than the opposite with all this fluidity, there being in their minds the possibility of a new, creative synthesis arising out of it.⁽³⁾ The latter in view of "the gods many and lords many" to which St. Paul refers⁽⁴⁾ was one of the most unpredictable, yet potential undercurrents in the age's whole subconscious life. Whoever should succeed in giving timeous expression to the underlying unity of thought and being that most men sensed and seemed to be seeking after as the key to life's enigma stood a fair chance of claiming their allegiance and meeting their deepest need.⁽⁵⁾ Here, once again, the Greek world had the form without the substance, while the Church possessed the latter. All she needed was the words.

The merging of religions is, to the student of history, a familiar

(1) Cf. Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria*, i, pp. 67-68.

(2) Greek philosophy in the time of Clement is practically everything that had issued out of the endless questing, up till then, of the mind and soul of man - Platonism, Philonism, the Mysteries, Orphism, in short, the entire prevailing syncretism of which the *Protreptikos* has given us an illuminating glimpse.

(3) Tollinton, *op.cit.*, i, p. 77.

(4) i Cor. VIII:5.

(5) The blending of religions in the syncretistic process and the resultant medley of many different gods had come to give rise, paradoxically, to the idea of one, supreme divinity overlying all of them. Cf. E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, pp. 111-112.

enough feature of the first two centuries. Christianity was, thus, readily regarded by the Gnostics as a welcome addendum to the general amalgam of ideas, another cult with something new and interesting to contribute, but with no claim to a special revelation of its own. This attitude was dangerous as all such claims have been before or since simply because it contained a certain element of truth. Christianity was, in many ways, the product of the age: but it remained in some respects (and these were crucial for its ultimate self-preservation) a thing uncompromisingly apart. The danger here was lest it should not succeed in remaining steadfastly aloof at the really vital points.

Alexander the Great's largely conceived ideal for the Hellenistic world had met with marked success. Greek culture had already over-run the Mediterranean lands, and much less than prophetic genius was needed to discern that here was a powerful instrument for the spread of education and a facile medium for the conveyance of cultural and spiritual ideals. The other danger for the Church in this connection was that, in standing resolutely aside, as Tertullian thought she should, she might cut herself adrift from what was substantially co-operative and sympathetic to her aims in Hellenism as a whole. The choice was that of narrow self-preservation at the cost of immediate advance or over-liberal accommodation to the detriment of the essential differentia of her faith. Was there a reasonable middle way between the gross repulsiveness of pagan idolatry and the Olympian yet ineffective erudition of the recluse philosophers whose sun had already set? Out of the ruins could the Church gather up the precious things of the human mind and soul, for the enrichment of her own testimony

and the enlargement of her life? The question was too central to be thrust thoughtlessly and irresponsibly aside. The Church had already gleaned what it believed to be the golden gains of a superseded Judaism. To many, the spoiling of the Greeks must have seemed, as it did to Clement, no less permissible than the "spoiling" of the Jews.

3. The Adherence of Educated Alexandrians to Christianity

Under the Emperor Commodus, a much greater measure of toleration was accorded to Christianity,⁽¹⁾ and this as much as anything had a bearing on the problem Clement had to solve.

The structure of Alexandrian society had retained the form imposed on it by its founder, a stratified social system dominated by an originally privileged Macedonian elite. In course of time, however, as the city progressed economically and achieved an ever greater measure of material prosperity, a class of nouveaux riches arose and increased proportionately. Leisure and wealth gave ample opportunity for cultural pursuits, education became fashionable, and when Commodus introduced his lenient religious policy Christianity tended to become fashionable as well,⁽²⁾ large numbers of wealthy Alexandrians seeking entry into the "fellowship of the saints". Clement's own Paedagogos is sufficient testimony to the influx of this wealthy, leisured class who, despite their aspirations toward high thinking, exhibited, it seems, not a few of the grosser manners which accompanied high living in the Graeco-world. There were, of course, many among them of the

(1) Eusebius H.E., V. 21. Cf. Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, p. 75.

(2) Although, as events were soon enough to demonstrate, the days of trial were not yet past.

best intellectual type⁽¹⁾ and Clement, we may be sure, had little trouble in singling them out. He was one of them himself and, for that reason, was more keenly aware than anyone in his day and generation of the tension⁽²⁾ between the Christian community and that invading world. The latter's own familiar thought-forms, according to E.F. Scott, offered, apart from any special guiding principle, obvious contacts with the faith. Paul, he asserts, employed such forms without, however, losing sight of their inner significance.⁽³⁾ The case might be different with others following his example but failing in his discriminating insight, to the detriment of the Church. Could Clement do what Paul had done before him in a much more involved environment while retaining the clear distinction between Greek thought-forms as such and the essential meaning of the Christian ideas they were utilized to convey, between the husk of Hellenism (to copy one of his own metaphors) and the kernel of Christianity? The outcome was, with this important and essential safeguard, Turner thinks, inevitable.⁽⁴⁾

(B) Internal

1. Inadequacy of Jewish Eschatology

Already in the Pauline literature and the opening chapters of the

(1) "Would the best elements co-operate with the Church?...if the best ...are to co-operate...the best have to be won...the best was very good, indeed, and...it was won for Christ." (Glover, *The World of the New Testament*, p. 9.)

(2) Tollinton, *op.cit.*, i, p. 91.

(3) *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 156.

(4) Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, pp. 24-25. Professor Joachim Jeremias of Gottingen is of the opinion (given in conversation with the writer) that the terms employed mattered but little, so long as the "scandalon" of the Gospel was not thereby minimized. For Paul the "scandalon" was the preaching of the cross - to the Jews a stumbling-block; for Clement it was the Gospel of the Parousia, the Word that was made flesh - the height of foolishness to the Greeks for whom evil and things material were practically speaking interchangeable.

Acts of the Apostles, we sense the beginnings of a crisis developing within the early Church. This is, domestically, and on a reduced scale, the sort of crisis that, as yet, lay in the future for the adolescent community in its inevitable contacts with the surrounding Gentile world. Paul's controversy with the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem over the vexed question of the circumcision of Gentile converts to the Faith is one of the first straws in the wind, and led inevitably to a reconsideration of the claims of Jewish traditions and ritual enactments upon those with neither racial nor cultural obligations to rabbinic Judaism. James, head of the Church at Jerusalem (as brother of the Lord), is indicative of the ease with which the Gospel might have been reabsorbed into Jewish traditionalism; and Paul, the Hellenistic Jew of the Diaspora, a son of Abraham, yet, at the same time, a proud citizen of Rome, the intellectual and spiritual colossus of the nascent Church, bestriding both the Hebraic and the Hellenic worlds of thought, yet seeing beyond both - these two in a sense represent the forces within Christianity which at this early period contended for control.

The controversy is continued in the Book of Acts over clean and unclean meats, and comes to open crisis in the martyrdom of Stephen who seems to have represented those within the Jerusalem Church itself who felt that the Gospel could not be committed to the fixed moulds of the traditional Jewish faith. The issues inherent in the controversy go, one can see, much further back, to the pre-institutionalized stages of the Church's life after the Resurrection and just prior to the first impact of the Gospel on the surrounding Gentile world, at that point where the relatively small company of believers waited with fervent

expectation for the so-called "Parousia",⁽¹⁾ the second coming of the Lord, when little need was felt for attention to or supervision of the material side of life, all things being held in common. This hope of a second coming is part of the body of traditional ideas which the first Christian converts (themselves Jews) had inherited from orthodox Judaism: but, as the days went by and all things remained as at the beginning, with the question rising to people's lips, one reads with increasing urgency, "Where is the promise of His coming?" the facts had to be faced and, in the long run, reassessed. The Jewish Messianic ideal had been tried in the balance of experience and found wanting, the Messiah of Judaistic eschatology being, as E.F. Scott has pointed out, an angelic being, high above all angels,⁽²⁾ but as separate from God as God in Jewish Messianic thinking is separated from the world, almost the complete antithesis of the God, in fact, who for our sakes was made man. The limited, though intense conception of the Church as a world-forsaking fellowship waiting with confidence to be caught up any minute into the paradise of God is not fully warranted by the teaching of our Lord, by those parables of the Kingdom which describe it, for instance, in terms of leaven⁽³⁾ or as a grain of mustard seed.⁽⁴⁾ Here we encounter the evolutionary idea (although the other idea of crisis, judgment, sudden precipitation is no less prominent). There is little or no place for the former in the extremer manifestations of eschatological belief which tend to be pessimistic in their attitude

(1) For Clement, as observed supra, the Parousia is the incarnation of the "Word".

(2) The idea was, according to E.F. Scott, the origin of the Colossian heresy which was a form of incipient Gnosticism. (The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 158.)

(3) Matt., XIII:33; Luke, XIII:19-21.

(4) Matt., XIII:31; Mark, IV:31.

to the world and human life in general.

The different universe of discourse met with in the Fourth Gospel, for example, as compared with the general setting of the Synoptics well exemplifies the change that took, and, it was felt, needed to take place. Paul had already paved the way, and the Epistle to the Hebrews simply does for Jewish ritualism what he had done for Pharisaic legalism, in face of the challenge of universalism in Hellenistic life and thought.

Under the increased pressure of circumstances, the question inevitably arose, "What is to take the place of an inadequate apocalyptic in the Church and in the world?" (For as soon as apocalyptic was found wanting, the claims of the temporal required to be set against the call of the eternal, or rather brought back into touch with it.) The answer ultimately was, "The philosophical interpretation of Alexandria." The Jews in Egypt, as we have already seen in reference to Philo and the Alexandrian Diaspora, had almost prepared the way for the supersession of their own Messianic ideology, and the alternative to a Jewish Messiah had been found by the Alexandrian Jews themselves in a Judaized philosophy,⁽¹⁾ a movement of thought in which the LXX played, as we know a leading part.⁽²⁾ The implications and the consequences of all this

(1) The Hellenistic and Hebraic influences are not separate in this process, says E.F. Scott, as is commonly supposed. Hellenism and Hebraism had been fused in Philo, independently of Christianity, and the resultant merger affected the entire Hellenic world in its religious attitude. (The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 161.) Cf. Harnack, Dogmen., ii, p. 175. "...both the speculations of the Gnostics and the theories of the Apologists were foreshadowed in the theology of the Jewish Alexandrians, and particularly in that of Philo. Here...the Gospel merely entered upon the heritage of Judaism."

(2) Cf. E.F. Scott, op.cit., p. 159. Educated Jews and others, he says were familiar with metaphysical terms. Paul has to plunge into the stream of contemporary speculative modes of thinking and media of expression to get himself listened to.

for the Christian Church are obvious. The very nature of the situation called for the application of the philosophical approach to her expanding life and faith.

2. Lack of Educational Facilities in the Church

Tertullian might cry, "Believe the Tradition," and good Christian souls might dutifully attempt to stick by his advice, but that was not to hinder them from reflecting on the "things most surely believed", however fervently they believed them or professed to so doing with their lips. Belief must keep step with experience, and it became obvious with time that the Church must be ready to meet the challenge of such rational introspection, at least be willing to discuss such questions as arose in believing men's and women's minds. Such a discussion presupposes a degree of rational activity and this is, as Clement rightly maintained, the genesis of philosophy. Certain Biblical beliefs invited speculation of this kind. The idea of creation, for example, as Turner has pointed out,⁽¹⁾ was bound to be referred to contemporary scientific thought. Could Christians continue to hold in spiritual suspension or in intellectual isolation ideas charged with philosophic content or, in part, philosophically derived? The need was to be felt by Christians themselves before many years had passed for a doctrinally coherent statement of the beliefs which they professed. Faith may at one time have sufficed; but the eternal Why? and Wherefore? could not forever be denied. The time was, in fact, ripe for the construction of a scientific theology, based on the rich resources of Greek philosophy. Under pressure from its rivals, Christianity was growing steadily towards maturity of thought. The

(1) The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 18. This largely vitiates Harnack's charge of secularization.

process of selection, the choice of roads to follow and of bypaths to avoid had already gone some way. This process was, in the main, instinctive to begin with, but it became gradually more articulate as the Church grew more aware of the need for a well-defined and definitive Rule of Faith. This was the relatively undiscovered country Clement was called on to penetrate. His only chart and compass in the undertaking was his clear, unswerving vision of the vital things at stake.⁽¹⁾

Behind this situation was the basically related problem of education in the Church, that is to say, the recognition and acceptance of education per se as an indispensable prerequisite to intelligent faith in Christ.⁽²⁾ Such an assertion must ring somewhat strangely in our ears, because a Christian educational system is for us a commonplace: but, as Marrou has clearly shown,⁽³⁾ the question was a good deal more involved for Christians in the second century than it is for us today. The school as a centre of Christian propaedeutics had not yet been conceived. The ordinary pagan schoolroom was where the children of Christian parents got their preparatory training whether in Athens, or in Carthage, where Tertullian conceded the use of the prevailing system,⁽⁴⁾ while condemning the philosophy by which it was

(1) The main issues were, according to Tollinton (Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 51), Freedom of the will, Dualism, and Valentinian speculative Cosmology.

(2) Cf. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions*, pp. 275-276.

(3) Saint Augustin et La Fin de La Culture Antique, Part III.

(4) The comprehensive name for later Greek education, Glover tells us, was "Rhetoric". Its "immense strength"...was..."its constant reference to the master minds of antiquity, the historians, the great poets, and the great philosophers, and its intimate knowledge of their masterpieces," all of which, Glover contends, is seen in "the progressive Hellenization of Christianity, as, still earlier, in the influence of Greek culture upon Judaism". The distinctive difference /

inspired, or in Alexandria, where the Catechetical School was, no doubt, begun as an experiment in the eventual direction of a Christian educational discipline.⁽¹⁾ Indeed, the city of Clement's Christian adoption was the only half-way house, it seems, between the Church and the pagan world. One of Clement's hardest battles was for education in the Church.

The tackling of this problem within a problem (thankless though at times it must have seemed) was a most necessary task. The Church, Clement realized, could not hope to make much headway in a cultural environment without providing for her people something comparable to the average facilities made available for educational advancement in the contemporary Greek world, far less could she anticipate the challenge of the educated, whether those already beginning to manifest intellectual idiosyncrasies in the Church, or those seeking entry into it. In setting himself up as advocate of this educational ideal, he was initially at the disadvantage of being in a conspicuous minority. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble," in St. Paul's famous words, were called. Dismissal of his case, however, from the outset could have thwarted his whole design. Opposition lay across his path, and pious prejudice presented a forbidding obstacle which had to be

(4) continued from previous page:

difference in the latter case is that between "the Proverbs of Solomon, so-called, and the Wisdom of Solomon". The basis of this new education, he adds, was literary and philosophical, and he comes very near to Clement's criterion of the "true philosophy" when he quotes Matthew Arnold's dictum to the effect that this ideal of culture is most happily defined as "to be familiar with the best that has been said". (The World of the New Testament, pp. 168-170.)

(1) The School, however, did not take much to do with elementary education in our sense of the words.

faced and set aside. In typical sophist fashion⁽¹⁾ he sat down and, mustering all the writer's and the pleader's craft, he wrote a book to dispel the opposition and overcome the prejudice. The writings that have come down to us are his apologia for an educated faith.

3. Clement's Own Cultural Heritage

"Struggle and appeasement, victory and reconciliation appear," says Niebuhr, "not only in the open where parties calling themselves Christian and anti-Christian meet; more frequently the debate about Christ and culture is carried on among Christians and in the hidden depths of the individual conscience, not as the struggle and accommodation of belief with unbelief, but as the wrestling and the reconciliation of faith with faith."⁽²⁾ This quotation almost perfectly delineates the areas within which the controversy about Christianity and Greek culture was conducted in the second century, sometimes concurrently in separate but never quite isolated stages - the Church and the outside world; the orthodoxists and the gnostics in the Church; the claims of culture and of Christian allegiance in the individual soul.

Clement belongs, as Tollinton has put it, "to the outer country, where Christianity and Philosophy met without a boundary line".⁽³⁾ That is why Alexandria begins with the universal Logos, while Irenaeus proceeds from the idea of the God-man. E.F. Scott thinks that there are points of contact in Clement with the typical Alexandrian

(1) Cf. Lietzmann, *The Founding of the Church Universal*, p. 280. Harnack (*Dogmen.*, ii, p. 324) says, "He (i.e. Clement) aims, so to speak, at first making Christians perfect Christians by means of a work of literature."

(2) R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 10.

(3) Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 17.

philosophy, and is of the opinion that in all probability this was part of the teaching of Pantaenus, Clement's instructor and predecessor in the Catechetical School. Echoes of such teaching (which recur, suggests Scott, in the Epistle to the Hebrews) are given in the thought of redemption as escape from the bondage of mundane reality;⁽¹⁾ the High Priestly function Christ exercises in bringing men near to God; and the ideal of the unification of beliefs under one central, governing idea or principle.⁽²⁾ Such tendencies had been quite unselfconscious until Clement, Scott believes; but with him the first deliberate attempt is made to realize those ideals within the matrix of Hellenism; yet, through it all, he reminds us, the religious interest never fails to dominate the scene.⁽³⁾

In many ways Clement was the child of his day and age, the representative, educated Greek man of the second century.⁽⁴⁾ We shall miss much of his significance for early Christianity, if we fail to keep in mind that he was a citizen of Plato's city, a former pupil probably of the latter's famous School. Like others in his generation he, too, had no doubt picked his way down from the upper speculative regions to search out in common with the average thinking man and woman where Wisdom might be found. He had gone far enough, the records indicate, to find the answer when he happened on Pantaenus hidden away in the "apostolic meadow" at Alexandria.⁽⁵⁾

It is as well to bear in mind that it was as a philosopher without

(1):(2) The Gospel and Its Tributaries, pp. 172-173.

(3) Op.cit., p. 175.

(4) Cf. Glover, The Conflict of Religions, p. 274.

(5) One wonders just how biographical Clement's oft-quoted words may be: "He, who seeks, will not stop till he find; and having found, he will wonder; and wondering, he will reign; and reigning, he will rest." (Str., V:XIV; 278(ii).)

Christ coming thus in contact with a philosopher in Christ that Clement found the object of his seeking and the anchorage of his soul. All that philosophy had adumbrated without realizing for him adequately so far, he found satisfyingly fulfilled at last in Christ, but mainly, as we can understand, within the philosophic framework which he had inherited. From the standpoint of personal allegiance, Clement's own position was precisely that of the intelligentsia of Alexandrian society with whom a great deal of his work in after years was destined to be concerned. They could not on becoming Christian shed, as one sheds an overcoat, their intellectual past.⁽¹⁾ Their problem was that of reorientation.⁽²⁾ It was Clement's problem, too. Representative as he was of Greek culture at its best, he had to rethink all this after his conversion and discover for it a new centre of gravity, in the light of his new-found faith.⁽³⁾ As Harnack puts it, only after subjecting it to a scientific and philosophical treatment could he make the Gospel "intellectually his own".⁽⁴⁾ This was, of course, the self-same readjustment that had been demanded of the Jews of Alexandria in their Hellenizing of traditional Judaism. They, too, felt the need of explaining their religious tenets to themselves. With all their

(1) Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 461.

(2) "Men were not satisfied merely to receive it (the Gospel); they sought to combine it with the truth they had already won, and so to enhance its significance." (E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 263.)

(3) He must "restate the Christian position in the language of philosophy" to show that Christianity is the reaffirmation and the sublimation of the best in the philosophic schools, the final philosophy, the revelation of the ultimate reality. (Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 276.)

(4) *Dogmen*, ii, p. 324. In the subjoined footnote, Harnack cites Clement's *Quis dives salvetur* as proof of this in regard to "the old principles of Christian morality"; and the *Paedagogos*, Books I and II, in regard to "the traditional faith".

fidelity to their ancestral religion they had learned, writes E.F. Scott, "to think in the Greek manner", and were in fact unable to accept the ancient forms unless they could somehow reconcile them with their new philosophic point of view. They had actually no other means of understanding their religion than by resolving it into the categories of Greek thought.⁽¹⁾ In this respect both they and Clement were on largely common ground. Clement could no more have visualized his Christianity as Tertullian would have required him to than the Ethiopian could alter the colour of his skin or the leopard change his spots. This personal equation had its important part to play in Clement's contribution to the cause of Christianity.

(1) The Gospel and Its Tributaries, pp. 159-160. It was no construction but a firm conviction on their part that Plato borrowed from Moses, and Clement shares their belief.

III. THE PROBLEM RESTATED

We should be able now to see with a fair degree of clarity the many-sided problem in which Clement was involved. "What," Tertullian had put it,⁽¹⁾ "has the Academy to do with the Church? What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" But there was more to it than that. Athens may not have had much connection with Jerusalem but Jerusalem owed something of a debt to Athens, and Paul had already acknowledged it.⁽²⁾ Men and women could not be banned from asking those penetrating questions which were raised by contact with the simplest Christian teaching, for example, our Lord's parables which touch on the big questions about which men since have never ceased to speculate... Providence and human destiny, creation and cosmology, moral responsibility, judgment, the life to come. It is no adequate position to brand men as heretics for daring to raise questions of this kind. The heresy would consist in answering them in a manner inconsistent with or flagrantly injurious to truth as Christianly conceived. Most heresies, in any case, at their inception represent failure on the part of official Christianity to tackle this or that hunger in the human soul, worthy or otherwise, that calls for satisfaction and that will not be denied, like modern Spiritualism representing formalistic Protestantism's failure to deal effectively with the question of survival and communion with the spiritual world; or Christian Science, the modern Gnosticism which seems as old as human curiosity itself. Clement's real difficulty was the complicated situation from within

(1) De Praes. Haer., VII; 9(ii).

(2) Rom., I:14. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise."

which the problem stared at him, the different angles from which it required ever vigilantly to be viewed. Could Tertullian's heroics on the martyrs and his Montanistic zeal stand fast before the subtle and seductive influence directed by philosophy against the simple-minded, however earnest they might be? The threat from the civil power had, admittedly, begun to spend its force, but philosophy was also beginning seriously to take notice of the Church, its ultimate demise being still a long way off, and the acids of rationalism could be as actively corrosive then as they are at the present day. The apparatus of persecution might burn the body and be left with nothing more that it could do, but "...after all the dialectic weapons of Philosophy were the more dangerous", for they could shake the faith of death-defying Christians,⁽¹⁾ like "mind-changing" and "brain-washing" in the "brave new world" of the twentieth century. A Church unequipped to deal with such a situation was a Church defeated before the issue had been joined; and indispensable to the Church's warfare with her philosophic adversaries were the weapons of philosophy. To meet these opponents in the arena their equipment was required, as well as their skill in the use of it. This had been, even earlier, the task of the Apologists; but there remained a further step which they had seen no cause to take, namely, the selective assimilation of philosophical arguments, not only to counter philosophic opposition, but also to win over the pagan intellectuals and the philosophers to Christianity. This was the vitally important step that Clement took. Unswerving faith, even to martyrdom, was not everything, he felt convinced (though he extols the martyrs), for the battleground had changed and the

(1) Glover, Conflict of Religions, p. 275.

Church's strategy had to change along with it.

The issue faced Clement, as it did the Church, in its many-sidedness, first, from within the Church itself. Where did the Church stand basically in matters of belief? This purely domestic situation was the outcome of external pressures as we shall see presently. A systematic thinking out of the credal situation was, in Clement's day,⁽¹⁾ a matter of growing urgency, as urgent as a re-thinking of it has, in fact, come to be in ours.

There was the question, secondly, as to where the Church stood in relation to "the world", the offset or reverse of the point we have just made in relation to the Church's internal life. Vitally bound up with it was the question of the further missionary outreach of a progressive Christianity and an expanding faith to correspond with a "more abundant life". Philosophy and Judaism were at this time both striving vigorously to capture the attention of the educated world. The higher brand of Gnosticism was deliberately designed to interest and attract this intellectual elite. These were not all of the contestants and competitors: but these were the most formidable. Christianity was challenged in this situation to throw out bridge-heads to facilitate the entry of the Gospel into the not wholly unsympathetic cultural environment, as well as to facilitate the entry of the cultured into the Church. Philo, that able "master of missionary method" to

(1) The Church "could not rest content with the simple Biblicism of the apostolic Fathers or the traditionalism of St. Irenaeus and Tertullian" without further translation into a more scientific theological idiom. (Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 462.)

the Jews of Alexandria,⁽¹⁾ as Turner so aptly puts it, had already paved the way and Clement represented those in the Church who were convinced of the advantages to be gained from copying his approach.

There was, in the third place, the borderline problem of the incipient heresies,⁽²⁾ represented for the most part by the Gnostics, the most influential body of whom was headed by the churchman, Valentinus. The questions, "Can the Church live with Gnosticism?" "Must everything the latter stands for be declared anathema?" could not forever be avoided. Clement's hostility to the Gnostics is unmistakably clear,⁽³⁾ though that has not prevented his being classed as one of them: but deeper motives were at work in his case, there is reason to believe. He searches for the common ground between the Gnostic and the Church that the latter may not be impoverished in her conception of the truth, even the truth promised her in Christ, and, equally important, that the Gnostic may not be lost utterly to the Church.

Turner has described Valentinianism as a "kind of metaphysical tone-poem which should serve in second century idiom as a Christian philosophy"⁽⁴⁾... "designed to exhibit the essential truth of the

- (1) Edwyn Bevan in his Essay, "Hellenistic Judaism" in *The Legacy of Israel*, finds the roots of the ancient and modern problem here. "And we today," he says, "whether we are Jews or Christians, may regard the Hellenistic Jews of two thousand years ago as bearing the first brunt in a conflict in which we too are engaged"... How much must you admit of Hellenism, what should you retain of Hebrew traditionalism? The Christian Church, he contends, inherited the great problem of the Hellenistic Jew"... how to find the right relation between Hebraic religion and Greek philosophy and culture". (Op.cit., pp. 42, 43, 63.)
- (2) These were simply an exaggerated aspect of the Church's general relation to the world.
- (3) Clement in the main and in the end, states Tollinton, stands with Irenaeus against Valentinus "...his Christianity dominates even his philosophy". (Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 70.)
- (4) *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. lll.

Christian religion to the Greek-thinking man".⁽¹⁾ Whether Gnosticism as a whole represents a fundamentally Christian system or a syncretism which had incorporated Christ and in which the latter rose naturally to take pride of place and exercise virtual control, adds Turner, remains an open question. Quispel, quoted by Turner⁽²⁾ in the context, makes out that Gnosticism was pre-Christian and was simply enriching its stock in trade from the new religion in the prevailing syncretistic manner. Egyptian popular religion, he considers, and magic, Babylonian astrology and Zoroastrian ideas, etc., had all entered into it. His main point is that Gnosticism was a world religion⁽³⁾ in its own right, and the leading Gnostics did not, he says, as maintained by Harnack, Hellenize Christianity. They Hellenized and Christianized "the dominant oriental mysticism of their respective systems". Tollinton also stresses the practical, religious character of Gnosticism in its

(1) Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, p. 51. The chief difference between Orthodoxy and Valentinianism, thinks Burkitt (*op.cit.*, p. 88), was the former's greater care in retaining Biblical terms. One could not think of a better illustration of this point than Clement who despite his extravagances attempts to maintain close contact with the Scriptures as known to him and accepted by his contemporaries.

(2) *Op.cit.*, *loc.cit.*

(3) "The Gnostics, whether of the Oriental or the Hellenic type, were at their best religious people, with a sincere sense of the value of redemption, and a true allegiance to Christianity, as they interpreted its message. But they held, and it was the one principal element common to all phases of the Heresy, that ultimate spiritual values were to be discovered in the realm of ideas, knowledge, abstract being, eternal principles, and philosophic verity...Plato and Eastern Dualism helped them to this result." So says Tollinton (Clement of Alexandria, ii, pp. 69-70), yet he says earlier in the same connection (*op.cit.*, p. 43) that Gnosticism appealed too much to the practical besides the intellectual to become merely a philosophy.

every shape and form,⁽¹⁾ and this distinctive feature of the movement was, in itself, a serious challenge to the Church. The subtle plausibility of the Gnostics in asserting their churchmanship was a further serious concern, and Clement made it his business to set forth the tenets of the sectaries in order to expose their falsehoods and subtleties.⁽²⁾

Beneath and beyond the problem facing Clement was, however, what Niebuhr so aptly calls "the perennial problem" of all philosophy...the problem of Grace and Works, of divine Providence and human Freedom, of cosmic direction and individual destiny, the problem of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, and, deeper than them all, the problem of Dualism, the One and the many, Being and Becoming, the eternal unmoved Mover and the endless flux of life.

"All systems of mediation," comments Tollinton, "originate from this." In this was embedded the question of the transcendence and the immanence of God to which almost every previous philosophy of religion had tried to provide an answer. Plato had set the example for the transcendentalists, and the Stoics had responded by popularizing the idea of an immanent World-soul which proved, on the whole, offensive

- (1) The lower possibly even more than the higher, for there the main emphasis was on gnosis as the solution of the individual's urgent religious problem, escape from evil, from the menace of daemons, from the doom of mortality...Paul's problem, uttered in that still reverberating cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom., VII:24.)
- (2) Turner has helpfully clarified the main differences between Christianity and its two great philosophic rivals, Gnosticism and Neo-platonism, though the latter enters somewhat later on the scene. The former he defines as a dualistic "emotionally tinged Mystik", the latter as a monistic, intellectual mysticism, and Christianity itself as "a differentiated Monotheism", offering "Redemption of the whole man in Christ". (The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 115.)

to a generation for which evil was tantamount to involvement in material existence. Reaction took the form of a recourse to the philosophic Absolute, remote from the world and human life, dwelling beyond both knowledge and revelation, with a great gulf set between. This intervening gulf proved an even greater stumbling-block than the problem it was invented to remove, and every interpretation of the universe from a religious point of view thereafter is an effort to bridge the gap, Plutarch with his daemons, Neo-platonism's golden chain of being, the Gnostic aeons, Wisdom and angelology in the Jewish scheme of things. All this in whatever form it might affect the Gospel was an axe laid to the roots of the Church's historic faith. Each of these was no better than an avoidance of the facts, and the facts had to be faced, at least, the central fact of Christ, the Word that became flesh; whenever we come, says Turner, in the most metaphysical of Christian thinkers on the fact of Christ as the historic Redeemer, this alone sets them in a different world from world-despising Greek philosophy.⁽¹⁾

The Incarnation was the real crux of the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity, and Clement must have realized that here was the rock upon which the Church must either perish or survive. In order to complete his dialectical equipment for the encounter with the theosophists Clement required something corresponding to the Absolute as represented in Platonism. He also needed something corresponding to the immanent World-soul, as conceived by Stoicism. He needed, finally, a vital bond of union between these two. The matter was far, however, from being simply theoretical. For Clement and the Church at

(1) The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 26.

Alexandria it was, in fact, grimly practical. The answer given by Gnosticism was conclusive in its way, the sort of answer given in our times by Christian Science and ultra-Protestant Liberalism. There was, in fact, no more vital issue for the young Church in the second century; there could be none more vital for the maturer Church today.

IV. CLEMENT'S ATTEMPT AT A SOLUTION

1. Basic Principles

(A) Philosophical: The Doctrine of the Logos

Clement's main task is the case he must make out for the essential reasonableness of an alliance between philosophy and Christianity. He leads up to the conclusion he is desirous of establishing by working over the ground carefully, and this exploratory operation has as its object the enunciation of a common principle of unity in the constitution of the cosmos and in the life of man, a ne plus ultra capable of embracing while at the same time reconciling all the dualistic opposites⁽¹⁾ - the phenomenal and the noumenal, matter and spirit, body and soul, reason and revelation, the human and the divine. Clement had, fortunately, not very far to seek. The unitive principle he so much needed lay on his very doorstep, so to speak. It was in fact at Alexandria, as we have seen, that the instrument had been forged and sharpened and the technique tested and worked out to do for Jewish, philosophico-religious teaching what Clement had in mind to do for Christianity with regard to Hellenism. Already within Christianity the Fourth Gospel had made way for the Logos concept as the key to cosmic Christianity. Clement was, therefore, in good company when he proposed it as the clue to his problem, and the solution which he sought. Let us proceed, accordingly, to see how he makes use of this.

(1) The problem of evil is the crucial difficulty for any philosophical theory which rests on the conception of the unity of existence: and Clement was quite aware of it. He had his own solution, too. Sin, he says, "is an activity, not an existence: and therefore it is not a work of God". (Vide Str., IV:XIII; 181(ii).)

idea.

The Logos⁽¹⁾ through the ages points unmistakably to God whose fellow-counsellor is that Wisdom which under many and varied names⁽²⁾ is present everywhere, though contained nowhere,⁽³⁾ and is identified with Christ, her "Spokesman". My song of salvation, as Clement puts it, is not new "in the same sense as an implement or a house. For it was before the morning star";⁽⁴⁾ and "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God".⁽⁵⁾ Now, inasmuch as

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- (1) C.H. Dodd in his Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel gives an illuminating insight into the meanings of the term Λόγος as employed by the evangelist and into that meaning of it which in this and the following connection may have been present to Clement's mind. "Λόγος", says Dodd, "is used of the 'Word of God', His self-revelation to men which is conceived both in the Jewish tradition and in the Christian Church to mean the Old Testament." Both in the latter and in the teaching of Jesus (John, V:37-38), a definite distinction is maintained between the voice (φωνή) of God and the Word (Λόγος) of God that comes to men in the process of communication. "No man hath seen God at any time," but His reality is for all that, according to Hebrew tradition, unimpeachable, and the Λόγος expresses this reality which is recognizable in the Scriptures and in those who have received the Λόγος into themselves. But in this, as in other things, there are levels of reality. The Word, as discerned in Scripture and in the hearts of men, is manifested in the fullest measure of reality, at its profoundest and most ultimate in Christ. This prima facie is the utterance of Jesus and the content of his teaching, but it is at root, as Dodd has put it, "a rational content of thought corresponding to the ultimate reality of the universe" (op.cit., pp. 226-227). To express it otherwise, God's spoken Word (Λόγος προφορικός) was given utterance through Christ, but in that utterance the Word, as creating, sustaining and informing the whole universe (Λόγος ἐνδοξαστός), is also dynamically involved. The Λόγος that goes forth in Christ prophetically, as it went forth of old time in the prophets of Israel, is, ipso facto, the Λόγος that upholds all things from the foundation of the world. (Str., VI:XVII; 397(ii).) This Wisdom which "in all ages entering into holy souls makes them friends of God and prophets" has two main aspects, viz., (a) the spirit which fills the world, inspiring men to be prophets and expressing God's omnipotence, and (b) the Word, Maker of the world, executor of God's judgments, for punishment or reward. Cf. also Str., I:IV; 365(i).
- (2) Str., VI:XVII; 397(ii).
- (3) Str., VII:II; 409(ii).
- (4) Ps., cx, 3.
- (5) John, I:I. The main quotation is from the Protreptikos, I; 21(i).

the Word was from the first, He was and is the divine beginning of all things but, because He has recently assumed the name of Christ, consecrated of old and worthy of power, I have called Him, says Clement, a New Song. "The Word, then, that is the Christ, is the cause both of our being long ago (for He was in God) and of our well-being. This Word, who alone is both God and man, the cause of all our good, appeared but lately in His own person to men; from whom learning how to live rightly on earth, we are brought on our way to eternal life... This is the New Song, namely, the manifestation which has but now shined forth among us, of Him who was in the beginning, the pre-existent Word."⁽¹⁾

The Logos speaks in the Old Testament and the New, for there is a testament of God which in both Testaments⁽²⁾ is one. There is, indeed, a covenant relationship in all culture,⁽³⁾ for the Logos may be heard also in Greek thought and literature.⁽⁴⁾ The Word, for instance, utters His voice in Homer's Iliad.⁽⁵⁾ Euripides is credited with mentioning the Father and the Son.⁽⁶⁾ Minos of Crete is compared with Moses and both are, in turn, compared with Christ.⁽⁷⁾ The comic poets

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- (1) Protreptikos, pp. 16-17 (Loeb ed.). The Logos in relation to the created things of God is, as well as the beginning, the $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$, the life-giving and formative principle of everything destined to have being. (Harnack, Dogmen., ii, p. 212.) This affords a striking parallel to C.H. Dodd's analysis of the Johannine connotation of the term \logos as employed in the Fourth Gospel.
- (2) Cf. Paed., I:VII; 152-153(i). The Law is ancient grace given temporarily through Moses by the Logos. Eternal grace and truth, however, were by Christ. Cf. also Paed., I:XI; 179-180(i).
- (3) "...the husbandman of the soil which is among men is one; He who from the beginning, from the foundation of the world sowed nutritious seeds...", the times and places being responsible for the differences that exist. (Str., I:VII; 374(i).)
- (4) Str., VI:V; 327-328(ii).
- (5) Iliad, i:248; Paed., I:VI; 147(i).
- (6) Str., V:XI; 263(ii).
- (7) Str., II:V; 12-13(ii).

of antiquity are invoked to bear testimony to the Word, not to speak of Plato "all but predicting the economy of salvation".⁽¹⁾

It is the same God Whose activities are seen in creation and in redemption. He is Lord of all things, absolutely, not one single entity excepted...⁽²⁾ the only Teacher, the Paedagogue of men.⁽³⁾ Many treasures are dispensed by one God through varied means, the Law, the prophets and so forth,⁽⁴⁾ but the Instructor is one and the same, in and through them all, and every creature owes its vital being and its origin to Him by Whose command all things subsist.⁽⁵⁾ Reason derives from Him Who is the reason of the universe by the Son Who is the Saviour of all, of those especially who believe.⁽⁶⁾

It follows that the law of nature ("the law which is connate and natural") and the law of instruction ("that given afterwards") are one and the same.⁽⁷⁾ To the child the ministrations of father, mother, tutor, nurse, are all of common beneficence. So also is the Word⁽⁸⁾ Who exercised His power both in the Old Testament and the Hellenic training.⁽⁹⁾ It is out of these last two that the people of the saved community are gathered into one. These are the people who accept faith, not from being of three originally different natures but through

(1) Str., V:XIV; 285(ii).

(2) Str., VI:XVII; 394(ii).

(3) Str., IV:XXV; 215(ii).

(4) Paed., III:XII; 334(i).

(5) The Logos is in Clement's day "the highest principle for the religious explanation of the world". (Quasten, Patrology, ii, p. 21. Cf. Harnack, Dogmen., ii, p. 326.)

(6) Str., VI:XVII; 401(ii). Clement quotes in support 1 Tim., IV:10.

(7) Str., XI:XXIX; 470(i).

(8) Paed., I:VI; 142(i).

(9) How does philosophy claim God as author? Thought (Φρόνησις), the underlying nature of the universe, assumes different designations in different situations. Related to sense it is Right Opinion, to handicrafts Art, to logical discussion Dialectic. It may thus take the form of knowledge, or of wisdom or of faith.

being trained under different covenants of the one Lord by the Word of the one Lord. The Jews were called after their fashion, and the Greeks likewise after theirs. Christians are called in a new, third, Christian way. Yet it was the same gracious dispensation of the Logos at work in all of them, to make all one in Christ.

There are some, of course, who say that those who were before Christ were, in His own words, "thieves and robbers", to which Clement makes reply, "They were admittedly before, but they were, for all that, in the Word."⁽¹⁾

Though men abstract for various reasons from the underlying unity,⁽²⁾ reality, through the operation of the Logos, is ultimately one; so, too, ultimately is truth which like some perennial river receives tributary streams from every side.⁽³⁾ This is what constitutes the condemnation of the sects. They have fragmented the basic unity. Yet they are all illuminated by the dawn of light, despite their partiality, many of the separate dogmas coinciding with truth as a whole; and, though pitched on different keynotes, yet compose one harmony. Even the barbarian (i.e. the Hebrew) and the Hellenic philosophies are only fragments of the eternal truth, torn off from the theology of the ever-living Word; and he who sets himself the task of bringing the separate fragments together once again, and restoring their unity "will without peril (ἀκινδύνως)...contemplate the perfect Word, the truth".⁽⁴⁾

(1) Str., I:XVII; 406(i).

(2) Str., I:I; 358-359(i).

(3) Str., I:V; 366(i).

(4) Str., I:XIII; 389-390(i). Clement goes to great lengths to prove the greater antiquity of the Jews in relation to the Greeks, and to establish the claim, accepted as factual by the Alexandrian Jews and made much of by Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelia*, passim) that the Greek lawgivers, poets, philosophers, etc., all borrowed directly from the "barbarian" (Jewish) philosophy.

For Clement, as for Philo, the Logos doctrine was, as we can realize, a conveniently flexible device not only for seeing all things 'sub specie aeternitatis' (its most valuable role still), but for co-ordinating diverse and discordant entities, bringing them into a comprehensive unity of discourse, if nothing more than that. The common aim of both is to demonstrate that the dynamic principle which the pagan thinkers postulated as the cosmic life-force or the universal reason, when examined, is the God revealed in the Old Testament. In Clement the further step is taken of establishing, according to Christian philosophical presuppositions, that in their several degrees these are simply adumbrations of the full and final revelation made to all men in Jesus Christ. For him the Logos has in addition this special function to perform of gathering together the disunified and discordant elements of contemporary religious speculation in an endeavour to restore the unity of both reality and truth.

This had the most important implications for the second century A.D. when civilized society with growing consciousness of its need sought a new spiritual impetus with power to unify and reanimate its life; when men and women craved assurance as to the nature and existence of the one God and Lord of all, and when the Church itself was striving, though but vaguely and hesitatingly as yet to reach through the diversities of its common practice and belief to what might develop into a sound Rule of Faith and life.

In his claim that Greek philosophy was from above, heaven-sent, a divine gift in response to human seeking, Clement, suggests Tollinton, was attesting the unity of Reason and Revelation.⁽¹⁾ He was doing

(1) Clement of Alexandria, ii, pp. 232-233.

that, undoubtedly; but he was doing a great deal more. He was, in fact, attesting the unity through Christ's appearing, of all life and of all thought.

(B) Biblical: The Doctrine of the Image of God in Man

Clement's first approach to the central issue is supported by another, mainly⁽¹⁾ Biblical conception which might almost be regarded as the reflex in human experience of the working of the Logos in creation and history. This is the concept of the imago dei, discussion of which follows.

In The Wisdom of Solomon (VII:26), Wisdom itself is spoken of as the image (Χάρακτῆρ) of God, "the brightness of the everlasting light".⁽²⁾ Clement, as we have seen already, equates Wisdom with the Logos, so that, whatever other meanings it may have held for him, the latter certainly embraced the image concept.⁽³⁾ In the Stromata, Book V, Ch. XIV, he embarks on an exhaustive marshalling of evidence concentrating on this point, and out of a vast array of instances, selected from many sources, he arrives at the conclusion that "...no race anywhere of tillers of the soil, or nomads, and not even of dwellers in cities, can live, without being imbued with the faith of a

(1) "Mainly", because a good deal of what Clement has to say about it is not exclusively Biblical.

(2) ἀπαυγάσμα ... φωτός αἰδίου. The word ἀπαυγάσμα is employed with precisely the same sense in Hebrews, I:3, a usage met with nowhere else in Scripture.

(3) Harnack takes the term οἰκονόμια to refer to the Logos as "the independent product of the self-unfolding of God" which is "the epitome of divine reason", without stripping the Father of this attribute. (Vide Dogmen., ii, p. 209.) This is the "single stage" theory of the Logos, for which vide H.A. Wolfson's art., Clement of Alexandria on the Generation of the Logos, in Church History, Vol. XX, No. 2, June, 1951, p. 72.

superior being".⁽¹⁾ He also quotes Peter, in Acts, X:34-35, in support of his contention that a dim knowledge of God existed amongst the nations because Christ was Saviour and Lord of all equally, both barbarians and Greeks, till in due time he called the faithful, the elect. The latter are not in any sense originally superior to the general run of men. If they stand out from the mass it is simply because they have believed in a special way, adapting themselves more perfectly to the predestination common to all. "...Christ became the perfect realization of what God spake; and the rest of humanity is conceived as being created merely in His image"⁽²⁾ which, discernible in every man, is "the love-charm" within,⁽³⁾ in Clement's graphic words, and this along with the surviving knowledge of God is indestructible.⁽⁴⁾ Such inalienable kinship with the Godhead is the prerequisite of man's moral striving and attainment, for, unless possessed of it, the seeker after truth could not so much as desire anything resembling the excellent and the good.⁽⁵⁾ However much he gave himself to contemplation he could never have attained the goal without "the prophetic utterance" (the witness of the Word throughout the course of history). This freedom to respond on man's part also involves, however, the ability to hold back that response. The Word kept pleading all

(1) Str., V:XIV; 297(ii). Cf. V:XIII; 273(ii) and St. Paul, Acts, XVII:24f.

(2) Paed., I:XII; 181(i).

(3) Paed., I:III; 118(i).

(4) Str., II:VIII; 24(ii). Cf. VII:VII; 440(ii). According to Professor David Cairns (The Image of God in Man, p. 160), present-day theologians of the school of Brunner distinguish two meanings of the imago dei: (1) the formal image of God which man bears as being different from the brute creation. This is not impaired by sin. It is, indeed, the presupposition of the latter's hold on man, and (2) the material image which Brunner holds to be lost utterly because of human sinfulness. Clement recognizes no such nice distinctions.

(5) Str., VI:IX; 346(ii). Clement's insistence on man's moral freedom is one of the chief points on which, repeatedly, he challenges the Gnostics.

through the past with men, and how often they would not hear.⁽¹⁾

Man's moral experience is the proof that he can co-operate with God, and that God co-operates with him, for many of the things that take their rise from some activity of human reason - health, gymnastics, wealth, etc. - are not produced exclusively by reason but are the joint result of divine providence and human agency, having received the kindling spark from God Who is the source of understanding.⁽²⁾ This at the same time opens up the way for man to the highest heights of spiritual achievement. Knowledge which is attainment of the wisdom of God is virtue, for to know God is to imitate Him, likeness to God, the power of assimilation to His nature being inherent in man's constitution from the beginning, in virtue of the image which he bears, "a sort of quality", says Clement, "akin to the Lord Himself".⁽³⁾ "He hastes to reach the measure of perfect manhood because God having made him in His own image has created him for immortality."⁽⁴⁾

Man from his creation, then, partook of the divine (which does not, however, mean that he possessed a portion of divinity)⁽⁵⁾ and, among

(1) Clement quotes Matt., XXIII:37. Paed., I:IX; 164(i), Str., I:V; 367(i).

(2) Str., VI:XVII; 398(ii).

(3) Str., VI:XVII; 394(ii).

(4) Str., VI:XII; 360(ii)... "Clement... relates all men to the Divine image. They are described as the image, or as created in it, or according to it. And, secondly, there is a sense in which the Christian is the image or likeness, a likeness which is dependent on divine grace and the sacraments, and which is perfected through sanctification, during the time that the believer is being educated by the Logos, who is Himself the image and likeness of God." (D. Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, pp. 85-86.) The writer calls this the double structure of the image found in the Bible where Clement no doubt also found it.

(5) Str., V:XIII; 273(ii). A tilt at the Gnostics who believed that they themselves represented a unique humanity in whom a spark of the life divine had lodged. Clement does not teach that man can attain to the knowledge of God by reason alone, because for him reason never actually is alone; it is part of a unity of experience involving both man and God.

all right-thinking men "there was always a natural manifestation of the one, Almighty God", an apprehension of the eternal beneficence in the working of Providence. Man, through reason which is a spark of the divine reason, may by rising above the things that hinder (the body and all impure desire) attain to the apprehension of God Whose "greatness has a natural order" transcending the customary and conventional. God "can, even without a medium", ... "produce a voice and vision" to convert the as yet unbelieving soul.⁽¹⁾

For both Clement and Origen, the dividing line between natural and revealed knowledge is very faint indeed, unlike the modern fence set up between them. "In their view all truth comes from God through His Word, and their conviction that the prophets and godly men of the Old Testament had known Christ in a way not at all unlike that in which the Christians of their own day knew him did not tend to make them draw any very marked distinction between knowledge of God before the Incarnation and knowledge of Him after the Incarnation, or, as a consequence, between the pagan's knowledge of the pre-incarnate Christ and the Christian's knowledge of the incarnate Christ."⁽²⁾

What of the question of salvation with which, from beginning to end, the Holy Scriptures are concerned? What does Clement have to say? God is the Father of all men, of those particularly who know Him, he replies. "One righteous man...differs not, as righteous, from another righteous man, whether he be of the Law or a Greek. For God is not only Lord of the Jews, but of all men...For if to live well and according to the law is to live, also to live rationally according to

(1) Str., VI:III; 323(11).

(2) Hanson, Origen's Doctrine of Tradition, p. 172.

the law is to live; and those who lived rightly before the Law were classed under faith, and judged to be righteous - it is evident that those too who were outside the Law, having lived rightly,...though they are in Hades and in ward, on hearing the voice of the Lord, whether that of His own person, or that acting through His apostles, with all speed turned and believed."⁽¹⁾ All men, that is to say, have, more or less, a knowledge of and an affinity with God. They were, however, always unaware of the full implications and stood in need of teaching.⁽²⁾ Clement belongs theologically to the company of those for whom the Atonement is restitutorial in character. For him the Saviour is the Christ who brings salvation, and who in his cosmic role came down from the realms of glory to enlighten men and so to lead the soul back to its restoration in the eternal world of light. "Sick," he says, "we truly stand in need of the Saviour; having wandered, of one to guide us; blind, of one to lead us to the light; thirsty,⁽³⁾ of the fountain of life, of which whosoever partakes, shall no longer thirst; dead, we need life; sheep, we need a shepherd; we who are children need a tutor, while universal humanity stands in need of Jesus."⁽⁴⁾ The highest things revealed by God are only a clearer manifestation of what is in the soul of man already. Even "the Gnostic disposition" (which is "called enigmatically 'divine providence'") is accessible to all,

(1) Str., VI:VI; 331(ii). Cf. V:XIV; 277(ii).

(2) Str., VI:VIII; 339(ii). To live according to Nature (the Stoic panacea) is, according to Clement, to evince the image of God in human life as pre-figured in Deut., XIII:4. Vide Str., V:XIV; 277(ii). He believes, of course, that the Stoics simply substituted the name and the idea of Nature for God. (Str., II:XIX; 59(ii).) and Cf. Str., II:XXI; 72-73(ii). For the general idea, he quotes Panaetius and Posidonius.

(3) John, IV:13, 14.

(4) Paed., I:IX; 169-170(i), I:III; 119(i).

for, Clement tells us, we are by nature adapted for virtue, although we must acquire it.⁽¹⁾ The assumption of both the accessibility of virtue and man's capacity to aspire to it, nevertheless, remain; and these two, man's moral freedom and his essential likeness to the author of his being, are, in Clement's view, the ground and pillar of the truth revealed in Christ, and the earnest of our salvation, for did He not become man, that we might become as God?

(1) Str., V:XIII; 271(ii). Christianity on this view is held to accord with the reason which is in man, though this has become darkened. (Rom., I:21.) The revelation of God, however, in the cosmos and in man comes far short of clear knowledge. The natural dispensation through the course of history is not to be denied, but neither must it be asserted beyond what it really is. Man left to the mere light of nature fell, as he falls still, into error. He was subjected to the sensuous and delivered into the power of daemons. Hence God took special steps to meet the situation, as it only could be met in the Word that became flesh.

2. Definition of Philosophy: The Latter's Place and Purpose in the Teaching of the Church

It is not to be assumed unconditionally, however, from any apparent apology on behalf of Greek philosophy in the foregoing that everything aspiring to the title is admissible. There is philosophy and philosophy; "many are called", Clement observes, "but few chosen", and we require to pick and choose.⁽¹⁾ What is intended is not "the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian, but whatever has been well said by each of those sects, which teach righteousness along with a science pervaded by piety,... "this eclectic whole", he says emphatically, "I call philosophy".⁽²⁾

When this has been said, it will be obvious enough that all human reason resulting from man's repudiation of the highest truth (and therefore false) must be disqualified. Clement's audience would need no introduction to the wrangling disputation which is for him "the tradition of men", associated with the sophistry of the Greeks "which makes false opinions like true by means of words".⁽³⁾ The dialectic of the schools, he indicates, is little more than intellectual acrobatics on mere matters of opinion for the sake of argument.

Paul, too, is substantially in agreement when he says, "...your faith should not be in the wisdom⁽⁴⁾ of men, but in the power of God"⁽⁵⁾ ...and "beware lest any man spoil you...by philosophy",⁽⁶⁾ branding not

(1) Str., I:XIX; 414(i).

(2) Str., I:VII; 374-375(i).

(3) Str., I:VIII; 376(i). Cf. Str., I:XI; 385(i).

(4) The wise in Scripture Clement understands as those wise only in appearance. (Str., I:XVII; 409(i).)

(5) Str., V:I; 225-226(ii); 1 Cor., II:5.

(6) Str., I:XI; 385(i); Col., II:8.

all philosophy, but the Epicurean (mentioned in Acts, XVII:18), "which abolishes providence and deifies pleasure, and whatever other philosophy honours the elements, but places not over them the efficient cause, nor apprehends the Creator".⁽¹⁾

The operative word here is, evidently, "spoil". In warning his hearers, Clement argues, the Apostle is not condemning or disparaging philosophy. He is simply deploring a gnostic retrogression to "the rudiments of this world".⁽²⁾ The basic distinction between the Christian as philosopher and the pagan philosopher as such is that the former loves Wisdom, Creator and Teacher of all, while the latter just argues about virtue. The fact that philosophy has been brought into disrepute by the conceit of some philosophers, as genuine knowledge has been discredited by oppositions of the same falsely so-called,⁽³⁾ is no real argument against it any more than the latter would be against knowledge. There is, as already suggested, good and bad in everything, and the Hellenic philosophy in this connection is like nuts, a certain proportion of which is nourishing while the remainder is inedible.⁽⁴⁾ Only the nourishing and, therefore, beneficial part is assimilable or permissible.

"Philosophy, then, consists of such dogmas found in each sect, ... as cannot be impugned, with a corresponding life, collected into one selection."⁽⁵⁾ Let no one imagine that the object contemplated is

(1) Str., I:XI; 384-385(i). The Stoics are also included in the catalogue of the proscribed.

(2) Str., VI:VIII; 339(ii); Col., II:8.

(3) 1 Tim., VI:20f. Str., II:XI; 33(ii).

(4) Str., I:I; 353(i).

(5) Str., VI:VII; 335-336(ii). Let a man milk the sheep, if he needs nourishment, shear the sheep's wool if he needs clothing. So, says Clement, "let me produce the fruit of Greek erudition". (italics mine). Str., I:I; 359(i).

sectarian ideas, that is to say, the kind of philosophy that masquerades under the banner of the Gnostic or other sects. The aim is real philosophy which may be defined as strictly systematic wisdom related to practical life and understood as certain knowledge signifying "a sure and irrefragible apprehension" of things human and divine, past, present and future, as taught by the advent and the prophets of the Lord. When one says "irrefragible", the meaning intended is "irrefragible by reason", because communicated. It is not the product, in other words, of human thinking but of eternal truth. For all that, it is communicated or expressed in terms of time and becomes useful in the context of the temporal.⁽¹⁾ It is "one and the same, partly many and indifferent" - partly moved, partly unmoved by passion - "partly perfect, and partly incomplete".⁽²⁾

Any emphasis laid hitherto or hereafter on the value of philosophy must not lose sight of the fact that, in relation to the Gospel, it is of secondary importance. Paul indicates its elementary character when he speaks of the "rudiments of the world".⁽³⁾ The providential ordering of events corroborates this for God foresaw that the heathen would not believe yet, in order that he might receive his own perfection, "gave him philosophy, but gave it him previous to faith".⁽⁴⁾ Consequently, Greek philosophy is characterized by its partiality. In the fitness of things the Law was given to the Jews and philosophy to

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- (1) Loc.cit. Cf. C.H. Dodd's comment, (The Fourth Gospel, p. 295) on the significance of *Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο* in the Prologue to St. John. (Jn., I:14.)
- (2) Str., VI:VII; 335(ii).
- (3) Col., II:8. Str., VI:XV; 372(ii). The Hellenic teaching is elementary and terrestrial, that of Christ is the true gnosis. (Str., VI:VIII; 342-343(ii)).
- (4) Str., VI:XIV; 368(ii).

the Greeks, until the Advent, and afterwards the universal calling came to the peculiarly righteous people, brought together by the one Lord, the only God of both Greeks and barbarians (i.e. Jews),⁽¹⁾ or, rather, of the whole race of men through the teaching which flows from faith. Philosophy is simply that portion of Divine truth, assigned by Providence on the principle of giving to each what best accords with its deserts.⁽²⁾ Its lower status is, besides, indicated by the fact that those who were righteous, through the agency of philosophy had not only, for salvation, to achieve faith; they also required to abandon idolatry.⁽³⁾

Again, the philosopher himself is but a child who can reach manhood only in Christ. He resembles the wild olive. By acquiring divine power through faith, by being "transplanted into the good and mild knowledge, like the wild olive, engrafted in the truly fair and merciful Word", he assimilates the nutriment provided and becomes a fair, good olive tree. He who was barren becomes thus fruitful "by the art of culture and by gnostic skill".⁽⁴⁾ Besides, even though men

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- (1) It is interesting to observe that Clement regards even the Old Testament dispensation as simply a phase in the wider provision made by God for all men through philosophy, of which a comparable phase is represented by the Greeks. "Thus, philosophy, a thing of the highest utility, flourished in antiquity among the barbarians (i.e. the Jews) shedding its light over the nations", and it was this light, adds Clement, "that led the way to the cradle of Bethlehem" - surely one of the tenderest thoughts in all his writings. Though Christ is unique, the Way supremely set before mankind, shall we not also recognize such other ways as lead to Him? (Str., I:XV; 398(i).)
- (2) Str., VI:XVII; 399(ii).
- (3) Str., VI:VI; 329(ii). In Str., VII:II; 410(ii) Clement says that the Lord of all "also gave philosophy to the Greeks by means of the inferior angels." This is like the theory invented to explain the origin of philosophy itself, viz., that it was the outcome of communication between certain heavenly beings who had access to the gnosis, and some of the daughters of men.
- (4) Str., VI:XV; 373(ii).

are philosophers, they must be saved by learning the truth through Christ, in Whom what was concealed in ages past is now made fully known.⁽¹⁾

No one will deny that the Greeks had some knowledge of God. That in fact (as Clement's argument so far is intended to demonstrate) is what we are chiefly driving at: but, neither will anyone deny that it is partial and elementary. It is likewise indirect.⁽²⁾ "Whence the Hellenic philosophy is like the torch of wick which men kindle (τῇ ἐκ τῆς θρυαλλίδος εἶκεν λαμπυρόντι, "like the shining of the wick"), artificially stealing the light from the sun. But on the proclamation of the Word all that holy light shone forth." Even in a house by night the stolen light is useful; but "by day the fire blazes, and all the night is illuminated by such a sun of intellectual light".⁽³⁾

There is a further argument. The prophets and apostles were not versed in the arts of philosophy, yet they were possessed of insight into truth, an insight others lacked. The reason is clear enough. Their mentor was the instructive Spirit and His instruction was infallible. They knew by faith what others readily could not know.⁽⁴⁾ This is borne out for instance by the fact that "the parabolic style of Scripture" which was of greatest antiquity (as was to be expected) abounded most amongst the prophets. This was the Holy Spirit's way of showing that "the philosophers among the Greeks, and the wise men

(1) Str., V:XIII; 273(ii); Ephes., III:5.

(2) Str., VI:V; 326(ii). The Preaching of Peter is quoted as a warning against worshipping God like the Greeks, because their knowledge was not delivered by the Son. Cf. Str., I:XIX; 413(i) where Clement gives as an example of this roundabout type of God-consciousness the ἄγνωστος Θεός of Acts, XVII:22-28.

(3) Str., V:V; 238(ii).

(4) Str., I:IX; 380(i).

among the Barbarians besides, were ignorant of the future coming of the Lord, and of the mystic teaching that was to be delivered by Him".⁽¹⁾

Philosophy is, finally, not the main preoccupation of the enlightened Christian, who always concentrates on the most important things. For him philosophy is a pleasant relaxation, something to which he turns when the real business of his life as a Christian has been duly attended to, "a kind of dessert at supper" which he may legitimately enjoy.⁽²⁾

The next step in the argument is to justify philosophy as an ally of Christianity, to vindicate the claims made so far on its behalf, to show what good purpose it is supposed to serve in the economy of salvation. Surely Christians, suggests Clement, have some concern for truth, and, surely, the things which co-operate in the discovery of truth are not to be despised. Does not true philosophy proclaim a Providence, the recompense of a happy life and the punishment of its opposite, teaching theology "comprehensively (*περιληπτικῶς*)"? It does not admittedly preserve accuracy in matters of detail seeing that it treats somewhat differently of questions such as the Son of God and the economy of Providence⁽³⁾ yet it co-operates in the discovery of truth. There is an element of truth in geometry, in music, and, therefore, in the right philosophy there will be "Hellenic truth" as well, but the final discovery of truth is by the Son⁽⁴⁾ who teaches "sacred letters" (*ἱερὰ γράμματα*) and whose teaching is complete and flawless in itself. To that Greek philosophy can add nothing, but the

(1) Str., VI:XV; 379(ii).

(2) Str., VI:XVIII; 401(ii).

(3) Str., VI:XV; 376(ii).

(4) Str., I:XX; 418-419(i).

latter is one of the many things that do add to the unity of truth and, as such, ought not to be despised. For those needing more persuasive proof, certain specific services of an unquestionably valuable nature might be quoted which are rendered by Greek philosophy. The latter, however, does not seek to add anything, except in a concurrent and co-operative manner in the ways enumerated:

I. By elucidating, as it does, our knowledge⁽¹⁾ of the truth, it arms us against falsehood and "those who assail us by fraud",⁽²⁾ "for to know the truth of anything is to know also what is false",⁽³⁾ and... "he who brings everything to bear on a right life, procuring examples from the Greeks and barbarians... is an experienced searcher after truth, and in reality a man of much counsel", (like the Lydian touchstone "which is believed to possess the power of distinguishing the spurious from the genuine gold".⁽⁴⁾ "It is a poor money-changer," observes Clement, "who cannot detect false coin."⁽⁵⁾

II. It also protects the Christian from the subtleties of sophistry which the truly enlightened believer must be able to distinguish where philosophy is concerned. Clement regards the activities of the Sophists as "treacherous plots laid against the truth"⁽⁶⁾ and, for that reason, upholds true philosophy as the "fence and wall of the vineyard".⁽⁷⁾ Wisdom undoubtedly is the Christian goal, but, "when thou hast strengthened Wisdom with a cope by philosophy, thou wilt preserve it",

(1) This ἐπιστήμη is organized on strictly scientific lines. It leads up by sure comprehension (κατάληψις), through true and certain reasons, to knowledge of the cause (γνώσις). Vide Str., VI:XVIII; 402(ii).

(2) Str., I:VI; 371(i).

(3):(4) Str., I:IX; 379-380(i).

(5) Str., VI:X; 350(ii).

(6) Str., I:XX; 420(i).

(7) Loc.cit.

Clement assures us, "unassailable by Sophists".⁽¹⁾

III. Furthermore, philosophy is indispensable as part of the Christian's armour in the war against the heresies, (described as "tares among the wheat").⁽²⁾ It is, in fact, precisely because of these heresies that the toil of investigation must be undertaken and carried out. Artificial fruits, for instance, do not reveal their true nature of themselves to the beholder, and would not be abstained from solely on the evidence of one's eyes. The difference between them and the genuine article can only be distinguished by observation and reasoning. This, then, is one of the valuable services rendered to the Gospel by philosophy. "I do not think," writes Clement, "that philosophy directly declares the Word, although in many instances it attempts and persuasively teaches us probable arguments." It forges the weapons for the dialectical encounter but it does not "ruin life by being the originator of false practices and base deeds, for it is the clear image of truth, a divine gift to the Greeks, though that had not hindered some from calumniating it. Nor does it draw us away from the Faith, as though bewitched by some delusive art, but rather...by the use of an amper circuit", it demonstrates one's faith.

IV. The wider missionary challenge must not be forgotten, either. In every generation there are those who cannot just believe, who attain to faith only by the way of demonstration and, in their case, philosophy

- (1) Str., I:V; 366(i). This does not signify that truth in itself by this means receives an accession of strength. Its true strength is in itself. The coping merely gives it a serviceable defence.
- (2) Str., VII:XV; 473(ii). There was one more argument in favour of philosophy which may have weighed with Clement's contemporaries. Philosophy, in common with Christianity, attacked the beliefs and practices of paganism on which the sects flourished to a greater or less degree.

prepares the way for the truly royal teaching.⁽¹⁾ This was the service which it rendered to the Greeks by way of righteousness..."a stepping-stone" given them by God "to the philosophy which is according to Christ",⁽²⁾ in whom the philosopher, a mere child so far in knowledge comes at last to man's estate. Denial of philosophy as an ally of the faith must mean denial of the philosopher's true spiritual development, whereas by the Church's recognition of Hellenic wisdom, the latter may find in Christ the Teacher of teachers, the fulfillment of his philosophy and the attainment of his quest. Surely, in all this it is Clement's own plea that we hear. He who was once such a philosopher himself without Christ speaks for all so situated, and his own life and testimony were, and remain the most persuasive arguments.

(1) Cf. Str., I:XVI; 405(i).

(2) Str., VI:VIII; 342(ii). In general, the benefit to all concerned is mutual, for the truth which is the source of knowledge is preserved by the juxtaposition and comparison of doctrines, and, even if the uselessness of philosophy could be proved, the result would still be useful! (Str., I:II; 360(i).)

3. Reasonable and Scriptural Grounds adduced for the admission of Greek Philosophy

Clement is not, however, reckoning without the opposition of some people in the Church, not to mention the actual horror which the very idea of philosophy begets in simple minds..."the multitude are frightened at the Hellenic philosophy, as children are at masks, being afraid lest it lead them astray."⁽¹⁾ But if the faith (for I cannot call it knowledge) which they possess", comments Clement, "be such as to be dissolved by plausible speech, let it by all means be dissolved..."⁽²⁾ Such people with their belief in "the Lord's advent and the plain teaching of the Scriptures" have never risen above the Law, whereas those who are given to philosophy are by the teaching of the Lord initiated into the true philosophy.⁽³⁾ The former are those who, in Clement's words, "do not wish to touch either philosophy or logic", or even "learn natural science", but "demand bare faith alone, as if they wished, without bestowing any care upon the vine, straightway to gather clusters from the first".⁽⁴⁾

According to the critics, Clement continues, we are not to philosophize: but, surely, even to criticize or condemn a thing, you

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- (1) Clement refers elsewhere to the stopping of their ears against Hellenic studies by those "inscribed with the Name", and thinks that this may actually argue the attractiveness of Greek philosophy, though it also indicates the childishness of simple believers who in reality are afraid that if they expose themselves they will be lost. Celsus, writing possibly from Alexandria, cast the jibe at contemporary Christians that their commonest attitude was, "Do not ask questions, only believe. Faith will save you. Wisdom is an evil thing and foolishness good." Vide *The Library of Christian Theology*, Vol. II, p. 18, quoting Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I:9.
- (2) Str., VI:X; 350(ii).
- (3) Str., VI:VII; 338(ii).
- (4) Str., I:IX; 379(i).

must be informed about it, and this involves philosophy.⁽¹⁾ The opposition comes back with the fresh rejoinder, "But...we do not all philosophize." Don't we? retorts Clement. "Do we not all...follow after life?" You say you believe, but how have you believed? You claim to love God and your neighbour. How can you do those things without reflecting on their implications, and, if you do reflect upon them, how can you possibly avoid philosophy?"⁽²⁾

Faith in the simple sense is inseparable from theology. For instance, we profess faith in the Son, but, "in order to believe truly in the Son, we must believe that He is the Son, and that He came, and how, and for what, and respecting His passion". We must know also Who he is. That is to say, the simplest Christian faith is based on certain facts and beyond these, on certain large presuppositions that we cannot but examine and have, at least, to know about. To believe in the Son we have to know the Father, and vice versa, and the knowledge of both together (the real gnosis) is the attainment and comprehension of the truth by the truth.⁽³⁾ Furthermore, a man may be a believer without learning, but it is impossible for a man without learning to comprehend the things which faith requires him to believe. We choose "what is well said" not by faith alone,⁽⁴⁾ but by faith conjoined with knowledge. What is most needed, Clement thinks, is a more thought-out, practically directed type of faith brought down to the common use of

(1) Str., VI:XVIII; 402(ii).

(2) Paed., III:XI; 327(i).

(3) Str., V:I; 220(ii).

(4) A recent book on Martin Luther with the title echoed in these words, "By Faith Alone", (W.J. Kooiman), seems to suggest that faith was Luther's whole defence, but it is obvious that there is a great deal more to it than that in Luther's case. Luther at least could read Latin. The Brunner-Barth school must reckon with facts like these.

language. So, he says, "...let those who frequent the market-place and the shop philosophize".⁽¹⁾

This does not, of course, exhaust the opposition's arguments. Others among them go even further and attest that philosophy and all its works are an invention of an evil influence.⁽²⁾ But there is to that, Clement tells them, a self-evident reply. How can the author of disorder and wickedness be claimed as the source of what is virtuous, and, surely, philosophy has qualified for that description? If, in point of fact, the devil were the giver of philosophy he would turn out to be more beneficent than God Himself because of his concern for enlightening the Greeks (when God, according to the opposition's argument, took no pains about this at all). Besides, if anyone should say that philosophy is the creation of some angel or some power that knew the truth, but abode not in it, the reply to that must be that, if God had considered this seriously hurtful, He would have intervened, when, actually, He did not. Surely, both Law and right reason, Clement urges, teach the good principle "To each according to his kind";⁽³⁾ "but I shall show," he promises, "throughout the whole of these Stromata, that evil has an evil nature, and can never turn out the author of anything that is good; indicating that philosophy is, in a sense, a work of Divine Providence."⁽⁴⁾

But we are not yet at an end. If this last counter-argument be not acceded to, there is, from the opposition side, the further, this time a popular contention, that Greek philosophy stumbled accidentally

(1) Paed., III:XI; 328(i).

(2) Str., I:I; 359(i).

(3) Str., VI:XVII; 399(ii).

(4) Str., I:I; 359(i).

on the truth claimed to inhere in it. Possibly, replies Clement, but, if so, it was as the consequence of an accident contrived by Providence (for chance cannot be deified).⁽¹⁾ Well, counter the critics, it was simply a product of natural religion (as we nowadays should say). So it may be, agrees Clement, but you have still to reckon with the fact that we have to do with a God Who created Nature,⁽²⁾ human and otherwise. The bondwoman's son may not be on the same footing as the offspring of the free: but he is at least a son of Abraham,⁽³⁾ and related in that degree. So, Greek philosophy cannot just be categorically disowned. Greeks and Jews both worshipped the same God indirectly, the Greeks, because their knowledge was not delivered by the Son, the Jews, because they, while thinking that they and they only knew Him, in reality, knew Him not. God furnished the Jews with the Commandments and the Greeks with philosophy, shutting up unbelief until the Advent, and leading both Greek and barbarian (Jew)..."to the perfection which is by faith", so that unbelief now has really no excuse.

Those who adopt the "fundamentalist" approach are challenged to be consistent with their own "fundamentalism". Does Wisdom not enjoin upon us in the Scriptures to do what "fundamentalists" deny? Are we not told that "prudence is the love of instruction, and love is the keeping of its laws", and that "the desire of wisdom leads...to the Kingdom"?⁽⁴⁾ Again, the Scriptures tell us to seek God's face

- (1) Actually one feels that Clement is arguing somewhat in a circle. He assumes here the thing he is trying to prove, namely, that philosophy is divine.
- (2) Clement allows that it was possible for those amongst the Greeks who had philosophized accurately to see God, "by reflection and by direct vision". (Vide Str., I:XIX; 415(i).)
- (3) Str., I:XI; 386(i).
- (4) Wisdom, VI:17-20. Vide Str., VI:XV; 375(ii).

continually, God being diversely self-revealing and in many ways made known. Faith must not be inert and solitary but accompanied by investigation.⁽¹⁾ "Search and thou shalt find,"⁽²⁾ Clement quotes, and comments, for "the Word does not wish him who has believed to be in idleness. Seeking drives out empty trifles and approves the contemplation which confirms our faith."⁽³⁾ Abraham was saved through seeking as the apostles were through finding.⁽⁴⁾ To seek, in fact, is a first claim upon our faith, and "seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness"⁽⁵⁾ he takes to be an exhortation to search for truth in word and deed. "He, who seeks, will not stop till he find; and, having found, he will wonder; and wondering, he will reign; and reigning, he will rest,"⁽⁶⁾ for the very essence of man's being is his rationality which is his basic kinship with God. He who communicated being and life to us, has also communicated to us reason, desiring us to live rationally and rightly.⁽⁷⁾ This is the meaning of the lamps carried by the wise virgins in the Gospel parable, "Wise souls, pure as virgins, understanding themselves to be situated amidst the ignorance of the world, kindle the light, and rouse the mind, and illumine the darkness, and dispel ignorance, and seek truth, and await the appearance of the Teacher."⁽⁸⁾

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- (1) Str., V:I; 226-227(ii).
 (2) Matt., VII:7, Luke, XI:9. Str., I:XI; 385(i). "The search for salvation by means of self-cultivation," says R. Niebuhr (Christ and Culture, p. 124), "and the response to Christ's saving act, are not one human action, but neither are they alien to each other."
 (3) Str., I:XI; 385(i).
 (4) Paed., III:VIII; 305(i).
 (5) Str., IV:VI; 155(ii).
 (6) Str., V:XIV; 278(ii).
 (7) Str., V:I; 223-224(ii).
 (8) Str., V:III; 231(ii). "They shall praise the Lord that seek Him," quotes Clement loosely from Ps., LXX:4 (Protr., X; 96(i)).

Paul prayed for the Philippians that their love might abound in knowledge and "in all judgment",⁽¹⁾ and counselled his converts "to prove all things".⁽²⁾ We must not abstain from learning, Clement protests, like irrational animals, though neither must we waste our time over Greek philosophy which is simply a stepping-stone to the philosophy⁽³⁾ which is according to Christ. This is the meaning of the advice given by the Word in Proverbs, V:2f., "Be not much with a strange woman," not a prohibition of the association, but only a warning against overdoing it.⁽⁴⁾ "The earth is God's, and the fulness thereof."⁽⁵⁾

(1) Phil., I:9.

(2) I Thess., V:21.

(3) Str., VI:VIII; 342(ii).

(4) Str., I:V; 367(i). W.H.C. Frend says in a recent article that "...the Gnostic did not reject all paganism as idolatry." Conversion to Gnosticism "did not oblige the believer to put away pagan philosophy and to study only the Bible". (The Gnostic Sects and the Roman Empire, Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. V, 1954, p. 30.)

(5) Ps., ~~XXIV~~:1; Str., VI:XVII; 400(ii).

4. The Role of Greek Preparatory Culture

Of the coming of the Lord, our Teacher, Clement tells us, there were numerous indications in advance, preparers of the way proclaiming from the foundation of the world, in deed and word, "prophesying that He would come, and where, and how", and "what should be the signs". Law and Prophecy kept Him in view from afar off; the forerunner announced His presence, and afterwards the heralds by their teaching showed forth the virtue of His appearing.⁽¹⁾ "For what was bestowed on each generation advantageously, and at seasonable times, is a preliminary training for the Word of the Lord" (προπαιδεύει γὰρ τῷ Κυριακῷ λόγῳ).⁽²⁾ Now, the argument has been, so far, to establish that Greek philosophy was given by God as a schoolmaster to bring the Greeks, as the Law, the Jews to Christ.⁽³⁾ This we may take to have been proved. Greek philosophy is queen of Greek culture⁽⁴⁾ but does not exhaust the latter's total range. The entire Hellenic propaedeutic system is included in the benefits that have come down from God to men,⁽⁵⁾ like showers falling on the earth. What is useful, then, in all culture we should select and make our own.⁽⁶⁾

Philosophy, per se, has, as it were, a cathartic quality, purging the soul, preparing it in advance to receive faith on which Truth

(1) Str., VI:XVIII; 404(ii).

(2) Str., I:V; 367(i), italics mine. For an exact and detailed description of the character and content of Greek preliminary training, vide Marrou, St. Augustin et La Fin de La Culture Antique, Part III.

(3) Gal., III:24. Str., I:V; 366(i).

(4) Wisdom is "the knowledge of things divine and human; and their causes". It is "queen of philosophy", and philosophy which is the study of wisdom is queen of preparatory culture. (Str., I:V; 368(i).)

(5) Str., I:VII; 374(i).

(6) Str., II:II; 3(ii).

builds up the edifice of knowledge.⁽¹⁾ It cannot claim to comprehend the whole of truth, and it is also powerless to perform the commandments of the Lord; yet it does prepare the way (ΠΡΟΚΑΤΑΓΕΥΑΖΕΙ) for the truly royal teaching..."moulding the character and "fitting him who believes in Providence for the reception of the truth".⁽²⁾ It was essential to the Greeks for righteousness; and it is now valuable in this preparatory manner for those who come to faith by reasoned explanation in which the attempt is made to prove that whatever is good, either in one way or another, is derived from Providence.⁽³⁾ There is nothing absurd in this "unless philosophy is ashamed at learning from Barbarian knowledge how to advance to truth".⁽⁴⁾

Now the ways of Wisdom leading rightly to the truth are various, natural science, for example, which treats of all the phenomena in the world of sense; intellectual objects;⁽⁵⁾ and dialectics for the reduction of things to their primary elements,⁽⁶⁾ the establishment of truth and the dispelling of doubt.⁽⁷⁾ "I call him truly learned," declares Clement, "who brings everything to bear upon the truth; so that, from geometry, and music, and grammar, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith against assault"⁽⁸⁾..."For what those labouring in heresies," he adds, "use wickedly, the Gnostic will use rightly."⁽⁹⁾

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- (1) Str., VII:III; 419(ii). The purging in question is "from corrupt and bad doctrines by right reason". (Str., VII:IV; 424(ii).)
- (2) Str., I:XVI; 405(i).
- (3) Str., I:V; 366(i).
- (4) Str., VI:XVII; 395(ii).
- (5) Str., II:II; 3-4(ii). "...and the learning of these branches, when pursued with right course of conduct, leads through Wisdom, the artificer of all things, to the Ruler of all." (Str., II:II; 4(ii).)
- (6) Str., VI:X; 350(ii).
- (7) Str., VI:XVII; 397(ii).
- (8) Str., I:IX; 379(i).
- (9) Str., VI:X; 351(ii).

This is the most succinct expression in the Clementine literature of what Greek preparatory culture was intended to achieve in the interests of the Faith. The whole extensive range of Hellenistic Paidia is to be combed and sifted through for the purpose of gleaning everything that can legitimately be enlisted in the Church's educational, apologetic and missionary task. The nett result is also positively useful in the Church's own internal life for the building up of men and women in their most holy faith. "Learning is needed," says Clement, "to make people noble and good, as learning is needed to make physicians and pilots. Those ill-disposed by nature may through training become good, those well-disposed by nature can grow bad from neglect."⁽¹⁾ Culture has further value for those who want to write; for those who deliver the Word; and those who have to deal with catechumens, particularly Greeks. All such enrichment of the Church's life and faith from the resources of Greek culture is like the irrigation of the land prior to cultivation. So also," Clement emphasizes, "with the liquid stream of Greek learning we water what is earthy in it so that it may receive the spiritual seed cast into it, and may with ease be able to nourish it."⁽²⁾

The chief and most challenging demand on Clement, first and last, was the dialectical approach to cultivated paganism, the fine art of manipulating all he knew of Hellenistic culture as an inducement to the Greek or rather the educated man of the Graeco-Roman world. His discussion of the aims envisaged by the dialectical approach will serve to round off this section and bring this topic to a close.

(1) Str., I:VI; 372(1).

(2) Str., I:I; 359(1).

The true dialectic, Clement thinks, is "philosophy mixed with truth"⁽¹⁾ (i.e. Greek philosophy combined with the truth as revealed in Christ). Those "who hunt after the connection of the divine teaching" which in the Scriptures is symbolic, preceptory and prophetic..."must approach it with the utmost perfection of the logical faculty".⁽²⁾ The Greeks must be shown "that the gnostic alone is truly pious". If they learn the real nature of the true type of Christian, they will realize how rash it is to persecute the Name; but to achieve this with them clearer arguments must be used, so that they may, from the advantage of their training, be enabled to understand the power of believing, though not yet worthy to partake of it, for there is in philosophy, though stolen as the fire by Prometheus, a slender spark capable of being fanned to flame, a trace of wisdom and an impulse which is of God. "Come, then, let us produce Plato," Clement says, "assenting to those very dogmas"⁽³⁾ (the universal kingship and the divine sonship of Christ referred to in the context). The philosophers amongst the Greeks received fragments of the truth from the Hebrews before the coming of the Lord. What is claimed by the Hellenists belongs in any case to the Christians, all things being God's; and whatever is of any worth has passed from the Christians to the Greeks. Let us, therefore, insists Clement, "handle those things as they are capable of hearing".⁽⁴⁾ He is quite confident that the

(1) Str., I:XXVIII; 467(i). "The lofty ethical and religious ideal of the man made perfect in fellowship with God which Greek philosophy had developed since the time of Plato and to which it had subordinated the whole scientific knowledge of the world, was adopted and heightened by Clement, and associated not only with Jesus Christ but also with ecclesiastical Christianity." Harnack, Dogmen., ii, p. 325.

(2) Str., I:XXVIII; 468(i).

(3) Str., II:V; 13(ii).

(4) Str., V:IV; 232(ii).

gnostic by his skill can reap the best harvest of souls,⁽¹⁾ and that there is good apostolic warrant for the method he advocates. Did Paul not do the same in his address to the Athenians on the Areopagus⁽²⁾ where it is evident that "by availing himself of poetical examples from the 'Phaenomena' of Aratus" he "approves of what had been well-spoken by the Greeks; and intimates that, by the 'unknown god', God the Creator was in a roundabout way worshipped by the latter, but that it was necessary by positive knowledge to apprehend and learn Him by the Son"⁽³⁾ for "...the Greeks, though not knowing how to become acquainted with it, deify the gnostic life".⁽⁴⁾ Wherefore, he adds, "to those that ask the wisdom that is with us, we hold out things suitable, that with the greatest possible ease they may, through their own ideas, be likely to arrive at faith in the truth, for (and here he invokes St. Paul), 'I became all things to all men, that I might gain all men'".⁽⁵⁾ There are besides, Clement continues, these two major forms of truth: (1) Names and (2) Things. The Greeks are most taken up with the study

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- (1) Str., VII:I; 408(ii). Clement, despite his erudition, is always missionary-minded.
- (2) Acts, XVII:18f. Vide Str., I:XIX; 413(i). Clement was probably an Athenian and, if so, must have heard of that first, dramatic encounter of the Christian faith with Hellenic philosophy. In Str., I:XIV; 391(i) he also quotes Paul in Titus, I:12 (a reference to Epimenides, a "prophet" of the Cretans, who is supposed to have said of them, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" whose witness, Clement says, is true). "You see," he adds, "how even to the prophets of the Greeks he (Paul) attributes something of the truth, and is not ashamed when discoursing, for the edification of some and the shaming of others, to make use of Greek poems." He also cites 1 Cor., XV:33, part of which he describes as a tragic iambic ("evil communications corrupt good manners") to lend force to his argument.
- (3) Str., I:XIX; 413(i).
- (4) Str., V:XI; 262(ii).
- (5) The reference is to 1 Cor., IX:22b, but, as so often, Clement is very free with his quotation. The actual wording is: "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."

of the names, but we who are Barbarians, he adds triumphantly, have the things!⁽¹⁾ The perfect answer to the problem, therefore, (what Clement had in mind when saying that the true dialectic is philosophy mixed with truth) is to combine the terminology of the Greeks with the truths or realities corresponding to and fulfilling them in Christ. This was Clement's special task. His mission was to make the categories which Plato had devised available to the Church. He was not the first to make the effort. Paul and the Fourth Evangelist had already blazed the trail; but what they drew on fitfully and incidentally he made central and systematically effective for the prosecution of his task, as well as of the Church's mission in the second century.

(1) Str., VI:XVII; 394(ii). "These writers and their followers had the high merit of introducing Christianity in the only form in which it would be likely to find acceptance with cultivated and scientific intellects...The argumentum *ad hominem* which they were thus enabled to use was eminently serviceable to them in conciliating opponents and in establishing the doctrines which they laboured to disseminate...The very terms with which their adversaries were familiar could convey the instruction which they desired to give..." (Deane, Prolegomena to The Book of Wisdom, p. 22, cols. 1-2.)

V. A NEW AND LIVING WAY

1. The Sure Foundation

(A) As Knowledge

The possibilities held out in the preceding apology for Greek culture and philosophy make it no longer necessary to press the claims of knowledge on the Christian or stress its significance for the fullest understanding and application of the Faith.

Science (to use a conveniently comprehensive title for the whole edifice of Greek Paidia) is, obviously, at its best, the ally of the seeker after truth. He finds knowledge valuable, and knowledge is "the scientific demonstration of what is delivered according to the true philosophy". Similarly, in argument or discussion, where certain things are admitted, and certain other things disputed, reason, which is part of science, may by working from what is admitted to establish what is disputed.⁽¹⁾ It is the governor which, while it remains itself unmoved, acts as a pilot to the soul, and, Clement adds, well for us that it is so, for "those who have no guidance fall like leaves".⁽²⁾ Faith in Christ is primary but it does not for the Christian exhaust the possibilities. The first rung of a ladder is not the whole ascent. Was Paul not obviously thinking along such lines when he wrote in 1 Corinthians, III:10-13: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man

(1) Str., II:XI; 30(ii).

(2) Str., II:XI; 32(ii), Prov., XI:14(LXX) for the A.V.'s "Where no counsel is, the people fall."

take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that (which) is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it..." The "gold, silver, precious stones", etc., represent, to Clement's mind, "the gnostic superstructure on the foundation of faith in Christ Jesus".⁽¹⁾ Again, in the same Epistle, the Apostle says, "But we preach, as it is written what eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and hath not entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love Him. For God hath revealed it to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God,"⁽²⁾ and further on, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit...for they are foolishness unto him,"⁽³⁾ and further on still, "Brethren, I could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, not with meat: for...ye were not able."⁽⁴⁾ In this, remarks Clement, the Apostle "...recognizes the spiritual man and the gnostic as the disciple of the Holy Spirit dispensed by God, which is the mind of Christ",⁽⁵⁾ unlike the natural man (φύσικος) who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit",⁽⁶⁾ and for whom the "milk" of the word suffices. Those who outgrow this elementary stage of development "partake of gnostic food".⁽⁷⁾ The gnostic's role in the

(1) Str., V:IV; 236(ii).

(2) i Cor., II:9, 10. Clement takes some liberty with the quotations, though without detriment to the sense.

(3) Loc.cit., v. 14.

(4) i Cor., III:1, 2.

(5) Str., V:IV; 235(ii).

(6) i Cor., II:14.

(7) Str., V:IV; 235(ii).

Body of Christ is predicted in the Epistle to the Hebrews. All those who prior to Christ inherited the promises through faith were merely novices. The gnostic has appeared now as the fulfilment of that better thing reserved for those who are the perfection of God's plan, "...that they should not without us be made perfect".⁽¹⁾ The mere believer may occasionally evince the gnostic character, in certain qualities or features more or less, "yet he will not do so in all nor with the highest knowledge, like the gnostic"⁽²⁾ who advancing beyond the simplices, the mere Scripture-tasters, fully unfolds the Scriptures from the Scriptures, starting from faith but persuading by demonstration,⁽³⁾ whereby he substantiates his gnostic theology.

There is according to Matthew, X:22, points out Clement, a secret tradition of true knowledge, and this was communicated to the inner circle of the disciples of the Lord by means of parables, but they were forbidden from communicating it to all and sundry without distinction, for the fulness of faith is seen only in a few, Peter in Matthew, XVI:17 being an excellent example.⁽⁴⁾ The limitation of "the deep things of God" to a minority was due from the beginning to the fact that the teaching of them was never published in written form or otherwise disclosed by the apostles who received them from the Lord.⁽⁵⁾ So then, declares Clement, we (meaning "we gnostics") are "believers in what is not believed and...gnostics as to what is unknown; that is, gnostics

(1) Heb., XI:36f.; Str., IV:XVI; 186(ii).

(2) Str., VII:XIII; 468(ii).

(3) Str., VII:XVI; 478(ii).

(4) Str., VI:XV; 382(ii).

(5) This, according to Clement, is supported by a quotation by Socrates from the Poetics of Cleanthes in the Phaedo, p. 52. (Str., V:III; 231(ii).) He also quotes Prov., X:14 and Paul in 1 Cor., VIII:1f. (Str., IV:XV; 183(ii).) Cf. VI:XV; 378(ii).

as to what is unknown and disbelieved by all, but believed and known by a few..."⁽¹⁾ Prophecy "does not employ figurative forms for beauty's sake. Its light shines only on those who seek the truth through love...being initiated into knowledge", as was the case in regard to the spoken word from the beginning, for "secret things are entrusted to speech"..."And to him who is able secretly to observe what is delivered to him, that which is veiled shall be disclosed as truth; and what is hidden to the many, shall appear manifest to the few."⁽²⁾

He will be "pre-eminently a gnostic" who is conversant with all kinds of wisdom⁽³⁾ which follows from the fact that the Lord is Himself the truth, the wisdom and power of God, and that the gnostic morally, physically and logically occupies himself with God. If he were asked to choose between the knowledge of God or everlasting salvation (assuming that these entirely identical things are separable) he would choose the former for itself alone without thought or hope of reward.⁽⁴⁾ The gnostic is simply the man who perseveres to promote "the growth of the seeds⁽⁵⁾ deposited in him", according to the husbandry which the Lord enjoins.⁽⁶⁾ Success for him is the realization of the fulness of Christ which "depends on our perfection" and the consummation of his striving after true manhood conformably to God's will.⁽⁷⁾ To this end, declares Clement, Christ is continually educating us and this process of enlightenment is fully realized in Him. The gnostic souls are like the consecrated virgins who wait the coming of the Lord.⁽⁸⁾

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- (1) Str., V:I; 220(ii).
 - (2) Str., I:I; 356(i).
 - (3) Str., I:XIII; 390(i).
 - (4) Str., IV:XXII; 203(ii).
 - (5) The Stoic *θερμαπικολ λογοι*
 - (6) Str., VII:XII; 465(ii).
 - (7) Str., IV:XXI; 200-201(ii).
 - (8) Str., VII:XII; 459(ii).

(B) As Faith

However much importance may be attached to knowledge there is notwithstanding that incomparable foundation of the Christian life which we describe, never quite exhaustively or conclusively, as "faith". The latter, according to Clement, is unique in so far as it takes precedence over all science,⁽¹⁾ on the one hand, and passes, on the other, far beyond such limits as human discovery by itself can ever reach. But how does faith anticipate the activity of reason, knowledge or science in general? The answer given by Aristotle, Clement quotes, is briefly this. Human discovery, as we would say, is popularly associated with the so-called exact sciences, and these rest ultimately on certain postulates that no one attempts to prove because they are incapable of proof. That is to say, the structure of scientific knowledge stands, basically, not on hard facts but on faith. Science accepts its basic postulates on trust. Remove these postulates, and faith is all that you have left.⁽²⁾ Thus, ultimately, faith is the foundation of the activity of science. One can go even further and assert, with Aristotle, that faith determines by itself our apprehension of the First Cause of all things. But how? Well, speculation on this subject includes judgment on events as causes and effects; but every act of judgment, Clement argues (quoting Aristotle once again), involves an act of faith. This is true in regard to

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- (1) J.Y. Simpson (Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion, pp. 91, 145) points out that when the Church Fathers spoke of "science", there was nothing in their universe of discourse really comparable to what that term signifies today; but only recently C.E. Raven has asserted that the essence of science is not discoverable in any of its appliances or practical by-products but in the scientific method (which is the same for the interpretation of phenomena, scientifically or theologically, for a Newton or an Origen. Vide Christianity and Science, p. 20.)
- (2) Cf. Prot., p. 27, "For the gates of the Word are the gates of reason, opened by the key of faith." Cf. Str., II:XI; 30-31(ii).

facts which are known to us already, but it is even truer in regard to facts we do not know.⁽¹⁾ All intellection is "an assent; which is nothing else than faith".⁽²⁾

But how, on the other hand, does faith transcend knowledge? Clement's answer to this question is a little more involved. Truth, he begins by pointing out, has these four pillars or supports: (1) sensation, (2) understanding,⁽³⁾ (3) knowledge (intellectual apprehension of the natural order) and (4) opinion.

Sensation is the first step in our cognitive experience yielding the data of perception, and from the latter, by reflection, we arrive at understanding, and the whole process culminates in knowledge. Sensation is thus the ladder leading up to knowledge, but in the process there is something else involved and in this something else we are thrown once again on faith which "advancing over the pathway of the objects of sense", to put it in Clement's wording, "leaves Opinion behind, and speeds to things free of deception, and reposes in the truth".⁽⁴⁾

We of the twentieth century who are more familiar with the spectacular discoveries of science in its empirical developments, can see what Clement has in mind. When all the facts have been assembled,

- (1) Sir James Jeans in his *Physics and Philosophy*, pp. 175-176, asserts this to be the only attitude left to the modern scientist in the presence of a reality whose ultimate nature he, qua scientist, can never really know.
- (2) *Str.*, II:XII; 34(ii).
- (3) It is out of the combination of sensation and understanding, Clement holds, that we gather evidence.
- (4) *Str.*, II:IV; 8(ii). Faith is ultimately of the transcendent order. It is the "attempt generated in time; the final result is the attainment of the promise, secured for eternity". (*Paed.*, I:VI; 133(i).) Knowledge simply demonstrates what faith has delivered. In the end the knower is merged into the known. (*Str.*, VII:X; 447-448(ii).)

at least, all the facts the scientist is able to ascertain, the real discovery so often has to wait on the intuition of the scientist, his faith that the facts are capable of yielding the something he believes demonstrable. His working hypothesis deduced from so much past experience and so many observed facts is in a sense a sort of scientific "creed". As C.E. Raven says, "It is difficult not to blame some at least of the historians of science for encouraging an almost mystic reverence for the scientific method: we can at least agree with one of the most thoughtful of them when he points out, not only that there is nothing peculiar or specially sacred in it, but that, unless accompanied by the imagination of the seer and the insight of the artist, it has never achieved any discovery of outstanding importance."⁽¹⁾

A serviceable point polemically is established by this argument. If faith is the foundation of our conscious experience, it must be the possession of all men and the monopoly of none.⁽²⁾ This is a clear thrust at the teaching of Basilides according to which there is amongst men a spiritual elite, the chosen, held to possess enshrined within them a germ of the divine. For them faith is supposed to be a natural endowment⁽³⁾ which relieves them of responsibility for unbelief (through past neglect) and renders irrelevant the sacramental ministrations of the Church, and even God Himself as conceived by Christian faith. Contrary to those who maintain that, spiritually, there are such basic differentiations, faith, Clement asserts, is the one, identical salvation of all men.⁽⁴⁾ Instruction leads to

(1) Raven, Christianity and Science, p. 20.

(2) Str., VII:II; 411(ii).

(3) Str., II:III; 6-7(ii).

(4) Paed., I:VI; 135(i).

faith.⁽¹⁾ If, therefore, men are educable in such matters they must be in common possession of the rudiments of the spiritual life.⁽²⁾

But, to revert to the main discussion, Clement holds faith to be complete and perfect in itself.⁽³⁾ This is the wisdom that is concerned with piety, and which without speculation receives Christ, the primal Word. It is "the cable" in Him⁽⁴⁾ holding all things fast and sure, "and reposes on God's power whereby salvation is possible without any need for proof. When faith like this is coupled with regeneration, it yields the perfect life."⁽⁵⁾ In fact if any man of the Greeks passing over the preliminary training of the Hellenic philosophy, proceeds direct to the true teaching, he distances others, though an unlettered man" by making the "leap of faith"⁽⁶⁾ to "the compendious process of salvation" unto perfection.

From this it will be seen that faith is not to be disparaged in an offhand way as simple or vulgar or a human habit at the best. If it had been a habit, as the Greeks contended, it would have utterly died out, whereas it is a phenomenon of man's experience in every age and clime.⁽⁷⁾

But, although faith may be complete or self-authenticating, it cannot claim to be everything. While, admittedly, the prime factor in a spiritual progression toward salvation, it is but one factor

- (1) Faith to the Gnostic, spiritually, is like the air that, physically, sustains him. (Str., II:VI; 19-20(ii).)
- (2) This follows also from what has been described elsewhere as Clement's doctrine of the Image of God in man.
- (3) Paed., I:VI; 134(i).
- (4) Cf. Paed., I:IV; 121(i).
- (5) Paed., I:VI; 132(i).
- (6) ἀλάμενος, after the reading of Sylburgius instead of the ἐλόμενος usually found in the original.
- (7) Clement's battle is "for simple and commonplace believers", too. (Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 56.)

amongst the many, important though it be. With fear and hope it leads up to repentance, goes on through temperance and patience⁽¹⁾ to perfection, till it arrives at knowledge and aspires to love at last. Philosophically and theologically this marks one of the most important steps which Clement ever took. He is working here toward the conclusion that knowledge and faith are complementary or mutually inter-related⁽²⁾ and that within this relationship faith is "a comprehensive knowledge of essentials" which is acquaintance with heavenly things, and unlike Sophistry is unteachable. The Law is fulfilled by faith in Christ and knowledge of the Gospel, and, unless you believe the law, you cannot understand the Old Testament, for instance, which Christ expounded by His coming.⁽³⁾ Knowledge at its highest demonstrates the rich, full content of the written Word for faith whereby the latter gains in intelligence; and this intelligent type of faith produces knowledge in its turn.⁽⁴⁾ Why, faith in Christ is tantamount to demonstration, Clement says, for He who suffered for us would never withhold anything essential for our instruction.⁽⁵⁾ Clement's reasoning on this score seems to run along these lines. The Christ who gave himself for our eternal good would never withhold anything

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- (1) Clement quotes Phil., IV:11-13. "The Christian man is capable of apprehending the truths of his religion not only by faith but with knowledge imparted to him by the Spirit." (E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, pp. 106-107.)
- (2) The assent of faith to the claims of God leads up to welcome and compelling certainty. It is by thus seeking and finding that man's experience is unified, and he finds rest. (Tollinton, *op.cit.*, ii, p. 236.)
- (3) Str., IV:XXI; 201-202(ii). Cf. Str., II:II; 5(ii). You cannot apprehend a past event unless you believe in it. (Str., II:XII; 34(ii).) "No one shall learn aught without faith..." (Str., II:IV; 11(ii).)
- (4) Str., II:XI; 31(ii).
- (5) Str., VI:VIII; 344(ii).

that is really good for us. Reasonable assurance of the things embraced by faith is, admittedly, for our good. Now, Christ is the Logos and, as such, the revelation of the rationality of the universe, of reality itself. Accordingly, to believe in Christ or to accept the revelation made through Him, is to possess by faith the sort of assurance reason asks for and is expected to provide. To believe thus is to know; to know this is to believe.

This close interaction between faith and knowledge comes out especially in relation to the Faith which represents "the understanding and the practice of the Godly tradition...the blessed doctrine delivered directly from the holy Apostles, Peter, James, John and Paul" who, says Clement, "came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds".⁽¹⁾ This is the concord and harmony of the Law and of the prophets in the covenant delivered at the coming of the Lord, and testified by his ascension.⁽²⁾ Now faith in the popular acceptance of the word is well enough: but it is not quite enough. The Christian needs the faith that trusts as a child trusts where it cannot know because there is much in the world around him and in his own experience that man cannot comprehend; but that does not absolve the Christian from making use of such knowledge as may be available. Faith by implication is involved also in the Faith amplified as extensively as sound knowledge will permit. This is, as we have

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- (1) A jibe at the Gnostics possibly. The "doctrine which is according to the Lord" in the language of the apostles represents for Clement "the true philosophy communicated by the Son" (I:XVIII; 411(i). It is only according as he accepts and lives by this, the Church's rule, that any man can really call himself a gnostic. (Str., VII: VII; 435(ii).) To abandon the "ecclesiastical and true knowledge, and the persuasion respecting God" for "false and incongruous opinion" is "adultery". (Str., VI:XVI; 391(ii).)
- (2) It was this and prophecy that authenticated the divinity of Christ.

noted, one of the most constructive contributions to the Christian philosophy of religion that Clement ever made. His effort to postulate a genuine Christian gnosis necessitated the negotiation of both sides in the debate.⁽¹⁾ The Gnostics emphasizing knowledge scouted the simple faith of the ordinary believer and the unexamined Faith embodied in the tradition of the Church. The simplices looked with somewhat justifiable suspicion on the gnostically inclined,⁽¹⁾ still numbered amongst the faithful in the Church at Alexandria. Did Clement see into the future and envisage afar off the widening rift that one day was to split the Church and rend all Christendom, resulting in the even further-reaching schisms that have characterized and weakened her up to our own day? He makes a noble effort to avert catastrophe, to narrow the widening gap and reconcile the adversaries, himself a sort of living bridge. Knowledge, he tells the Gnostics, is, indeed, a splendid thing; but knowledge is not all. Faith, he assures the faithful, is pre-eminent standing fast upon the Scriptures,⁽²⁾ but it is none the worse for any benefits which true knowledge is in a position to supply.⁽³⁾ This need not worry them, however, since faith is the main thing in the end. The gnostics, too, have no ground for being alarmed over talk of "faith alone". There is no call for them to jettison their culture or forsake the world of knowledge; no less than the simple, they will come at last by their

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- (1) Clement, however, stands by the fideists. It was his sympathy with the simplices, thinks Glover (*Conflict of Religions*, p. 273), that made his undertaking possible.
- (2) Cf. Str., VI:XV; 378(ii). "But if virtue is divine, so is also the knowledge of it."
- (3) The second century, Glover comments, is characterized by "a tendency to flightiness in speculation on the one hand, and a stolid refusal to speculate at all on the other". (*Conflict of Religions*, p. 263.)

own road to Him who is the Way, for heaven is inhabited, says Clement, by "the philosophers of God...Israelites, indeed", he tells them, "in whom there is no guile".(1)

His great work which has rightly been called the boldest literary undertaking in the history of the Church is, says Harnack, "...the first attempt to use Holy Scripture and the Church tradition together with the assumption that Christ as the Reason of the world is the source of all truth, as the basis of a presentation of Christianity which at once addresses itself to the cultured by satisfying the scientific demand for a philosophical ethic and theory of the world, and at the same time reveals to the believer the rich content of his faith".(2)

(1) Str., VI:XIV; 366-367(ii). Clement is quoting John, I:47, and Matt., V:8.

(2) Dogmen., ii, p. 324.

2. The Royal Road

But the knowledge so much prized by Clement and his Christian sympathizers is never just knowledge as the technically-minded twentieth century has come to think of it,⁽¹⁾ nor even knowledge by itself, nor is it an end to be sought after for itself. It has its value principally as a means for the realization of the spiritual ends of Clement's Christianity.

The Hellenistic world of the second century A.D. was almost obsessed with the desire to be emancipated from the imprisonment of matter to be delivered from the body, to rise out of the flux of Becoming into the permanence of Being,⁽²⁾ above change and decay to immortality. The strength of Gnosticism as a way of life held out to Clement's generation was its promise of the secret gnosis as the passport through all the toils and dangers of this present world and whatever other worlds might be. It is the spiritual index of the world-weariness of the age which finds its most marked expression in the tedious moralizing and self-catechizing of Marcus Aurelius. How modern sounds this very old refrain of "otherworldliness" which is today as ever the appeal of most varieties of religious escapism or millennial evangelism.

We shall be quite mistaken if we proceed on the assumption that

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- (1) Vide Prot., pp. 50-51 (Loeb ed.). "...there was of old implanted in man a certain fellowship (κοινωνία) with heaven, which, though darkened through ignorance, yet at times leaps suddenly out of the darkness and shines forth."
- (2) The typical Hellene, writes Tollinton, found Stoic depreciation of the physical and material a relief. Stoic *ἀπάθεια* and Platonic dread of involving ultimate Being in Becoming were the root ideas of this Gnostic attitude. (Clement of Alexandria, i, pp. 44-45.)

the attention Clement gives to γνώσις is the mere bookishness of a Christian Schoolman who has lost touch with the outside world.

Knowledge in this context is a most practical affair. It is, in fact, a man's most responsible preoccupation as the schooling of his soul, the discipline whereby, first and foremost, he gets to know himself;⁽¹⁾ that he may by reasonable avoidance⁽²⁾ of the bad and cultivation of the good achieve the supreme aim and end of life⁽³⁾ which, if we may be permitted so to put it, is a valley of soul-making. The goal envisaged is in itself a really mystical ideal, though Clement comes, in practice, some way short of thoroughgoing mysticism. Paul had felt and said the same. "For now we see through a glass darkly but then

- (1) Cf. Paed., III:I; 273(i). "For if one knows himself he will know God; and knowing God, he will be made like God..." γνῶσις σεαυτοῦ was one of the foundation principles of the Socratic creed. The Greek moralists had already evolved a theosophy in which this was the ideal.
- (2) The modern reader finds Clement's "asides" on the virtue of avoidance somewhat curious today, e.g. his idea that food taken to excess clogs and, therefore, obstructs the soul, (Paed., II:I; 198 (i)) and the equally odd notion that restraint in drinking keeps the soul pure, dry, luminous and, therefore, wisest and best. (Vide Paed., II:II; 206-207(i); II:I; 193(i).)
- Clement does not attack high-living on purely ethical grounds or for strictly ascetic reasons, but in so far as it involves danger to the soul engrossing the spiritual man in material conditions. This attitude was universal, as we have seen, in second century philosophy.
- (3) The object of all self-denial for the gnostic is purity of heart that, in Clement's words, "he may be initiated into the beatific vision face to face, having heard the scripture which says, 'Fasting with prayer is a good thing.'" (Str., VI:XII; 363(ii).) The quotation is from Tobit, XII:8. Cf. Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, i, p. 85, where it is suggested that Clement's thinking on the subject was probably coloured by the initiation into the Mysteries (the ceremony of καθάρσις intended to prepare the candidate for oneness with the divinity). Clement had learned this, says Tollinton, before he became a Christian. "The pure in heart shall see God" when they arrive at the final perfection, (Str., V:I; 224(ii), quoting Matt., V:8), "initiation", for the Christian being a life-long discipline.

face to face: now I know in part but then I shall know even as also I am known."⁽¹⁾ The end and object of it all is what Clement, in common with his contemporaries, thought of as deification (Θεοποίησις, Θεός) and we shall require to ascertain as far as possible what that means. Clement devotes considerable space to his description of the way leading onward and upward to the goal. Restraint (ἐγκράτεια), self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) and impassibility (ἀπάθεια)⁽²⁾ are the main steps on the way. The soul is subjected to this exacting discipline, then, in due course, prepared and purified, it waits for the great day which is the end of life and the beginning of eternity.⁽³⁾ Clement's teaching on this aspect of the subject may be briefly summed up here.

"We are enjoined," he tells us, "to cast off the old and carnal corruption, as also the old nutriment, receiving in exchange another new regimen, that of Christ, receiving Him if we can, to hide Him within; ...that, enshrining the Saviour in our souls, we may correct the affections of our flesh."⁽⁴⁾ The body is such that we are "bound to it like an oyster to its shell".⁽⁵⁾ Does not the Lord call us to take up our cross and make ourselves naked of the pleasures of the world, "aiming only at salvation"?⁽⁶⁾ What, then, some may ask, is the object of existence in this world? The increase of science (ἐπιστήμη), Clement answers, "and the acquisition of knowledge. Those who observe this rule think less of living and more of living

(1) i Cor., XIII:12.

(2) Part of the regular terminology of Stoic ethics, some of which is found also in St. Paul.

(3) Paed., I:XIII; 185(i), reminiscent of Seneca.

(4) Paed., I:VI; 142(i).

(5) Str., V:XIV; 300(ii).

(6) Str., III:III; 291(i).

well. This is life according to nature,⁽¹⁾ and all excess beyond the limit laid down by the rational soul in man is an offence against nature, an encouragement to sin, and the exercise of death.⁽²⁾ The passions are the signatures on the soul of the powers with which man must contend. It follows that the Christian has to exercise restraint (ἐγκράτεια),⁽³⁾ man's heart being like a caravanserai, peopled with sinful guests. As far back as Moses the prohibitions against eating certain animals were laid down with this in view. "If thine eye," misquotes Clement, "offend thee, cut it out."⁽⁴⁾ The gnostic will renounce children, marriage, parents even, for the sake of the divine love and righteousness of life. The Instructor, the charioteer⁽⁵⁾ of the soul enjoins upon us in all things including luxury that due proportion which is temperance conjoined with caution, the fruit of obedience to right reason. Plain living and high thinking is the ideal, and the latter is attained by our nature training itself to be content with little, for "...the best riches is poverty of desires... and the good man standing as the boundary between a mortal and immortal nature has few needs beyond what is useful and essential for human fellowship and his sojourn in this life,⁽⁶⁾ for what are mundane things but false forms of reality, creative of false values? But self-restraint is not enough since it assumes the existence of human passions and excesses needing to be restrained which does not become

(1) Str., VI:XVI; 385(ii).

(2) Str., II:XX; 63(ii).

(3) Which never oversteps what is according to reason.

(4) Str., III:XI; 322(i) where Clement reads ἐκκοψόν for the usual ἐκείλε in Matt., V:29.

(5) Paed., III:XI; 313(i). This was one of the titles given by Philo to the Logos.

(6) Str., VI:IX; 349(ii). Cf. VII:III; 418(ii).

him who aspires to be the friend of God."⁽¹⁾ There is a further step in the preliminary discipline, and this is self-sufficiency ($\alphaὐτάρκεια$) enabling its possessor to cease from dependence on the world of external things.

The gnostic in this state of attainment can dispense with courage, desire and all the other "appendages",⁽²⁾ for he "has enrolled himself among the friends of God".⁽³⁾

Clement's whole train of thought is linked in this connection with an idea that recurs time and time again. It is intended, he remarks, "that we should be saved by ourselves".⁽⁴⁾ This does not mean, of course, that we can save ourselves by ourselves, for the gnostic is self-sufficient only in relation to the world. It is in his relationship with God, and Him alone, through knowledge and grace divinely given, that man, in any sense, is sufficient for himself.⁽⁵⁾ What Clement really means is that man has, from his side, a vital part to play; human freewill enters into the experience of salvation, but the latter, first and last, is God's gift to us in Christ.

"Follow God," counsels Clement, "stripped of arrogance, stripped of fading display, possessed of that which is true, which is good,

- (1) Str., VI:IX; 347(ii).
- (2) Basilides taught that man resembles the Trojan horse containing a host of different spirits in one body, and Valentinus gave currency to the idea of the appendages, the impurities that attach themselves to the soul when at birth it journeys from the higher world to this. (Str., II:XX; 65(ii).)
- (3) Str., VI:IX; 346(ii).
- (4) Str., VI:XII; 360(ii); cf. VI:XV; 376(ii). Tollinton takes this to mean that for Clement immortality is conditioned. (Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 249.) Clement claims that the gnostic is spiritually elect, but only in so far as he assimilates to God by moral effort. Jesus' own, "Well done, good and faithful servant," carries the implication of what Clement is driving at.
- (5) Str., VII:VII; 438(ii).

which alone cannot be taken away - faith towards God, confession towards Him who suffered, and beneficence towards men, which is the most precious of possessions." But we must go up higher yet. There is a nobler virtue still which we are called on to cultivate, and that is impassibility, freedom from perturbation, unassailable tranquillity, detached indifference. Everyday evidence is given of this highly esteemed virtue in the presence of those "trained so as to manifest their piety with their blood", who "burnt, impaled, beheaded...rise above the passions and are greater than the world".⁽¹⁾

The intellect in man is the image of the Word, discerned in him alone. Now, the Word was utterly impassible⁽²⁾ ($\alpha\pi\alpha\theta\eta\varsigma$), and so should we be also.⁽³⁾ Endurance and patience both contribute to this end; knowledge also plays its part, for knowledge produces practice, and practice produces habit or disposition, and this is the secret of impassibility which is a different thing from moderation of the passions.⁽⁴⁾ But, again it may be asked, "What useful purpose does this serve?" and again comes the reply, "It takes us within a step of the goal of all good life, for when he who partakes gnostically of this holy quality devotes himself to contemplation, communing in purity with

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- (1) The gnostic never exposes his soul to submission or capture by Pleasure or Pain. (Str., VII:VII; 439(ii).) He tramples the bad things underfoot and leaves the good to those who need them. (Str., VII:XII; 465(ii).)
- (2) The Gnostic has natural requirements, says Clement, but these Jesus did not have. He simply ate and drank to anticipate those who might lean to Docetic views. (Str., VI:IX; 344(ii) and cf. Paed., I:II; 115(i).) This explanation on the part of Clement is, of course, a Docetic view itself. The opposite of $\alpha\pi\alpha\theta\eta\varsigma$ is conceived of as the whole process of entering into life and sharing the common lot; and this signifies for the Gnostic Christian in the fullest sense conceivable the "Passion" of the Lord.
- (3) Str., II:XX; 60-61(ii).
- (4) Str., VI:IX; 346(ii).

the divine, he enters more nearly into the state of impassible identity, so as no longer to have science and possess knowledge, but to be science and knowledge"(1) himself...having consecrated the sepulchre (for the flesh is dead to him) into a holy temple to the Lord.

(1) Str., IV:VI; 157(11).

3. The Gnostic Goal

The soul is now prepared, so to speak, for the last stretch to the summit, the highest point of which is Platonic contemplation, and "rising above the sphere of generation...dwells apart amid ideas".⁽¹⁾ The final goal is vision and the upward way is lost in the glory of the light ineffable and fades into silence at the last.⁽²⁾ The gnostic, Clement has already told us, "is even now being assimilated to God and is destined to be divine". Here we require, if anywhere, to see the vital connection between knowledge and the experience whereby the gnostic seeker becomes Θεός or deified.

Bultmann has gone fully into the respective Hebrew, Greek and Gnostic connotations of the word θεωσις which is used by Clement here. The Hebrew connotation signifies acknowledging the works of God and responding to His claims. The Greek connotation, on the other hand, implies pure contemplation in its most abstract form, mainly with

- (1) The reference to the soul's escape from the "sphere of generation" is strongly reminiscent of Gnostic dualism. The sexes in the latter (which was under undoubted Asiatic influence) are regarded as the means of perpetuating all those physical conditions which are the seat of pain and evil. It was for this reason that the left-wing Gnostics held marriage to be one of the evil and, therefore, forbidden things.
- (2) This may have been associated in Clement's mind with the silence enjoined by Pythagoras on his disciples that in quietness of mind they might contemplate the region of ideas (which the chief of the Greeks learned from Moses). (Str., V:XI; 261(ii).) Clement, says Tollinton, alludes to the three great stages on the mystic way, associated with the Mysteries, Purification, Initiation, Vision, referring to the divine Lord as the true 'Mystagogue'. He speaks, too, of "a sudden light, like that kindled by a coruscating fire arising in the soul" comparable to the mystic illumination. (Str., V:XI; 267(ii).) This is not Neo-platonic ecstasy, though Clement exhibits strains of later Neo-platonism. He sees the goal of the latter afar off "in the conscious knowledge of reality and God". Vide Tollinton, op.cit., ii, pp. 238-240.

reference to static being, the thing-in-itself, as one might say. The Gnostic meaning has no inner connection with the Hebrew whatsoever. It approximates to the Greek so far as it signifies something akin to contemplation (*θεωρία*); but its own intrinsic contribution is derived from (a) the ecstatic vision and (b) the magic formulae of the Mysteries. "Beyond that," says C.H. Dodd, "it is unlike all other knowledge; no longer an achievement of the human intellect," but God's gift making a man no longer that superior type of humanity, the philosopher living the *βίος θεωρητικός*.⁽¹⁾ This throws some light on the frequent allusions made by Clement to what we might otherwise take too literally to mean deification. His scattered references to the subject also help, when we have gathered them together, to indicate what he has in mind. The Christian gnostic having risen above sin and become continent abides in spirit with those similar to himself, "among the choirs of the saints,"⁽²⁾ though still detained on earth", and praying in the society of angels "as being already of angelic rank".⁽³⁾

(1) The term *θεωρητικός*, according to Tollinton, is simply taken over from its widely current use in the contemporary world. Clement's fellows were quite used to thinking of Roman emperors as gods (Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 92). Divinities were as numerous as men in some localities of the Hellenistic world; but Clement applies the term to perfected human nature, as he conceives it, without suggesting deification in the literal sense of the word. Commenting on Torrey's reconstruction of Matt., V:8, D. Daube says that the idea that man ought to imitate God occurs in many religions, and is certainly very old in Judaism (Lev., XIX:2 cited). By the time of the Rabbis, he continues, it is almost commonplace (Rabbinic commentaries quoted on Exod., XVII:5, Deut., XI:2, etc.). He thinks that for unsophisticated minds there existed no inconsistency between perfection as an aim and the inevitable failure of all attempts to reach it...between the call to be like God and true humility. (Vide "Concerning the Reconstruction of the Aramaic Gospels", John Rylands Library Bulletin, Vol. ii, No. I, July, 1945, pp. 34, 35, 38.)

(2) Str., VII:XII; 465(ii).

(3) Str., VII:XII; 463(ii).

The gnostic soul, the joint product of nature, nurture and reason, is the image of the divine power here on earth.⁽¹⁾

By upward striving of the mind and by participation in moral excellence the gnostic "hastes to reach the measure of perfect manhood",⁽²⁾ and, because he was created for immortality, may assimilate to God, being made perfect as the Father⁽³⁾ Who is in heaven. From this high level of attainment, then, he must try never to fall back,⁽⁴⁾ since he is passing over into immortality and should not court corruption. He can, however, count throughout on God's co-operation, "for He shall sustain us".⁽⁵⁾ The Paedagogus by His teaching in the Gospel admits us to the adoption and friendship of God and so brings us to His likeness, "to the just inheritance of the lords and gods".⁽⁶⁾

This, then, for the gnostic is perfection, the true manhood, the realization of the "fulness of Christ" by the Spirit working in his flesh. He who bears about the Saviour's cross and follows in the Lord's footsteps, Clement says, is the dwelling-place of God⁽⁷⁾...a god going about in the flesh, "God-bearing and God-borne".⁽⁸⁾ It is, in

(1) VII:XI; 452(ii).

(2) Str., VI:XII; 360(ii).

(3) Matt., V:48, Str., VI:XII; 364(ii).

(4) Paed., I:XII; 182(i).

(5) Paed., I:IX; 170(i).

(6) Str., VI:XIV; 371(ii).

(7) Str., II:XX; 61(ii).

(8) Str., VII:XIII; 467(ii). This quotation serves to illustrate what $\chi\psi\omega\delta\iota\varsigma$ appears to mean for Clement, that special knowledge whose possessors are initiated into the presence of the Eternal and the power of an endless life, $\tau\eta\nu\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\eta\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \theta\iota\omicron\delta\alpha\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \pi\alpha\rho\alpha\theta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu$, the secret tradition of the few as distinct from the Scriptures, as popularly received and understood. It is even, according to Hanson, $\tau\omicron\nu\ \alpha\pi\omicron\rho\rho\eta\tau\omicron\nu\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\nu$ not to be displayed before the ordinary believer. (Vide Hanson, Origen's Doctrine of Tradition, pp. 53-56.) Turner thinks that it amounted to more than an esoteric tradition of exegesis, more than "a preliminary groping towards a scientific theology". His final conclusion is that it is really "a mystical penetration into the Being of God Himself". (The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 401.)

the last analysis, a mystery that no one can explain. Perhaps the Father draws the gnostic soul to Him, or perhaps our freewill clears the intervening barriers at one leap. It is "not without eminent grace", however, that the soul wings its Godward way.⁽¹⁾ "At once leaving all hindrances, and despising all matter which distracts him," "the gnostic" "cleaves the heaven by knowledge; and passing through the spiritual Essences, and all rule and authority, he touches the highest thrones, hasting to that alone for the sake of which alone he knew".⁽²⁾ "But let us, O children of the good Father - nurslings of the good Instructor,...listen to the Word, and take on the impress of the truly saving life of our Saviour; and meditating on the heavenly mode of existence according to which we have been deified, let us anoint ourselves with the perennial immortal bloom of gladness - that ointment of sweet fragrance - having a clear example of immortality in the walk and conversation of the Lord..."⁽³⁾

(1) Str., V:XIII; 271(i).

(2) Str., VII:XIII; 467(ii).

(3) Paed., I:XII; 181(i).

VI. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

As we stand contemplating Clement's picture of the 'model Gnostic' we are brought back suddenly to the twentieth century by the reverberations of the wordy battle that began in Clement's day and has been going on with varying fortunes for the one side or the other down through the centuries ever since. Tertullian and Clement cry to us across the years and in every generation both are met with kindred recognition and response. Before we take our last look into the latter's lecture-room at Alexandria, let us pass in review some of the main topics of contention, dealing first with judgments in criticism of Clement and the attitude for which he clearly stood, and noting subsequently any arguments in support of his point of view.

Professor John Macmurray's thesis in regard to the ethical depotentialization of the Gospel as a consequence of its alliance with the Stoic philosophy poses a real problem for present-day Christianity, and if the case he makes out can be proved, no one on general considerations would appear more liable for responsibility in this than Clement upon whom, as has been said, the burden of Hellenism lies more heavily than on any other Father of the Church. Yet, it is just here, surprisingly, that we find the situation to be very much the opposite.

If Christianity did, in fact, forsake the practical for the contemplative sphere, it must have been somewhere outwith the sphere of Clement's labours or at some time other than the period within which his life was spent. Faith, for example, has for him the all-important quality of practical efficacy. Faith saves but in the saved soul it must be followed up by works.⁽¹⁾ Philosophy, he maintains,

(1) Str., VI:XIV; 367(ii).

holds fast to three things, viz., (1) speculation, (2) performance of the precepts and (3) the creation of good men, but the highest speculation is that which "scans the greatest mysteries, the real knowledge ...from which rectitude of conduct is never disjoined".⁽¹⁾ Rational choice is the beginning of action, and faith lies at the root of rational choice. Thus, faith is the spur of action, and the first principle of understanding is to follow voluntarily what is useful.⁽²⁾ "He who climbs the heavenly way" must carry with him the fair staff of beneficence, and attain to the true rest by communicating to those who are in distress.⁽³⁾

Clement alludes in this connection to the Psalmist's dictum, "I have never seen the righteous begging his bread," and comments that this follows logically from practical belief, because the righteous will never really be called upon to beg, so long as there are truly righteous people upon earth, "and to sleep beside a sick friend, help the infirm, and supply him who is in want, are proper exercises"... "the better sport which the Lord assigned to the disciple", being that of catching men,⁽⁴⁾ for he who is made like the Saviour is also devoted to saving, and this is to worship God by deeds and knowledge of the true righteousness.⁽⁵⁾

The true Wisdom trusts "not in mere words and oracular utterances but in...energetic mysteries, and, devoting itself to divine commands and exercise and practice, receives a divine power according to its inspiration from the Word". Let the wise man, then, show his wisdom,

(1) Str., II:X; 30(ii).

(2) Str., II:II; 6(ii).

(3) Paed., III:VII; 302(i).

(4) Paed., III:X; 312(i).

(5) Str., IV:XVII; 189f.(ii).

not in word only but in good deeds as well, for "Piety is conduct suitable and corresponding to God".⁽¹⁾ Even the image of God in man has practical significance, for, says Clement, he most resembles God who imitates God as far as possible. The true Gnostic is good and does good continually. "He who shall do and teach is greatest in the Kingdom."⁽²⁾

In the *Paedagogus* Clement says again, the Instructor being practical, not theoretical, His aim is thus to improve the soul, not to teach; and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life,⁽³⁾ and again, the Word that became flesh was both practical and contemplative.⁽⁴⁾ This practical emphasis springs from the importance which Clement attaches to the will in the Gnostic life where "...the department of action is most conspicuous both in the testaments of the Lord, and in the laws in force among the Greeks, and also in the precepts of philosophy:⁽⁵⁾ but it derives also from his theology. God works continually, for a God who rested from His labours never really could be God.⁽⁶⁾ It is attested that intelligence is "twofold", practical and theoretical.⁽⁷⁾ Tollinton inclines to the view that in Clement knowledge predominates.⁽⁸⁾ Even so the prominence given to the will in gnosis by the latter is not thereby minimized.

These proofs are not produced to serve as a denial of Clement's

(1) Str., II:IX; 29(ii).

(2) Str., II:XIX; 57(ii); Matt., V:19.

(3) Paed., I:I; 114(i).

(4) Paed., I:III; 120(i); cf. Str., VII:XVI; 484(ii).

(5) VI:XVII; 401(ii).

(6) Str., VI:XVI; 388(ii).

(7) Str., II:V; 15(ii). Cf. Str., VI:XII; 363-365(ii), IV:XVII; 188(ii), VI:XV; 375(ii), II:XVII; 46(ii), VI:VII; 338(ii), VI:XV; 376(ii).

(8) Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 14.

ample debt to Greek philosophy. Wendland is quoted by Bardenhewer as asserting that Clement borrowed liberally from the Stoic Musonius; but coming much nearer home, we need but recall Pantaenus, a known Stoic in his day. Turner shows further that Clement modelled his *Protrepticos* on a work of Posidonius, not unlike the lost writings of Pantaenus, and that the *Paedagogus* has a Stoic lineage.⁽¹⁾ Besides, so much of what was in the "atmosphere of thought" in those days was strongly tinged with Stoic influence if not deriving from the latter;⁽²⁾ and, remarks Turner, "When the Church had to apply the Gospel to mundane experience, it drew on the Stoic ethical system."⁽³⁾ One would think that the latter being immanent and so consistently practical, its application or assimilation to the Gospel would have produced on Christianity the very contrary effect to that alleged above. As a matter of fact, however, the major influence observable in Clement is not Stoicism at all but Platonism as in all the ante-Nicene Fathers. There were three major intellectual forces playing on the outlook of the day: (1) Stoicism which was mainly ethical, (2) Platonism which was metaphysical and (3) Neo-Pythagoreanism which combined with certain other things was predominantly mystical. There

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- (1) *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, pp. 448-454. Stählin's *Stellenregister* is indicated for further evidence of Stoic borrowings. Cleanthes, Chrysippus and Posidonius all wrote a *Protrepticos*.
- (2) E.g. the whole Logos terminology: the Stoic *Pneuma* representing the principle of cohesion in (a) the cosmos and (b) the individual soul: the ethics which shine through Clement's discussion of indifference, etc., and Wisdom in the Apocrypha which draws its content only partially from the Jewish heritage of ideas.
- (3) "Clement," says Lietzmann, "is a disciple of the Stoics, also, in so far as he constructs his ethics not only in the form of general principles, but also discusses systematically the various spheres of life, and makes his teaching clear in individual cases, what we should call casuistry." (*The Founding of the Church Universal*, p. 285.)

seems in the light of these considerations every reason to suspect the likelihood of Clement's immersion in the contemplative life to the exclusion of all else, but still we discover the contrary. It is the teacher we have to do with, always thinking of his pupils and enquirers with their problems as much as of abstract truth. Indeed, Clement's experience of the hearers and not doers who frequented the lecture-rooms of cultured, non-Christian Alexandrian circles lies behind his clarion-call for deeds as well as words. He was still living at a time when the metaphysical had not swamped the influence of the ethical, as it did eventually. He is still conscious of the clear call of Jesus to rise out of self to truth and goodness, that he who seeks the Kingdom finds, and he who finds shall rest. He refuses "...to separate Religion and Philosophy, Faith and Knowledge, Thought and Action".⁽¹⁾ The seemingly fastidious details of deportment in private and public life of which the Paedagogos is a veritable compendium are his insistence that obedience to God if it should be required at all must be rendered in the concrete, actual life of natural, cultural man. Since asceticism and the general effort to contract out of life is ultimately vain,⁽²⁾ the only obvious alternative is in the most literal sense to make the best of it. In modern phraseology wisdom for Clement is existential or existentially conceived, and this follows logically from his conception of the Logos which is the Heavenly Father's will in action, never weak and never

(1) Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 232. Cf. op.cit., p. 96, and Harnack, *Dogmen.*, ii, p. 330.

(2) Str., II:XIX; 57(ii); II:XIX; 59(ii).

ceasing from his love and care for men,⁽¹⁾ as justice indicates. We tend to forget the schoolmaster in the philosopher and theologian; but Clement's idea of Jesus as the divine Schoolmaster, his conception of the world as a great schoolroom for man's moral and spiritual training wherein, through experience of the discipline of life, he wins his way to reach the prize of the high calling of God in Christ gain new significance and have a bearing scarcely as yet dreamed of on the problem of good and evil, the ultimate meaning of existence, the claims of science and religion, reason and revelation, the corporeal and the spiritual, mechanism and value, conduct and belief. "Perfection," says Clement, "is with the Lord, Who is always teaching, and infancy and childishness with us who are always learning, the goal being full manhood in Christ."

"What," Harnack asks, "would be left of Christianity, if the practical aim, given by Clement to this religious philosophy were lost? A depotentiated system," he replies, "which could absolutely no longer be called Christian;"⁽²⁾ or, to quote Scott, if the real question is whether the Church succeeded in affirming the power of an endless life as Jesus inaugurated it, the bringing of the will into harmony with God's will, then, Clement stands vindicated: and (to paraphrase), if the involvement of the Gospel in the speculative cobwebs of the

(1) Cf. Str., VI:VI; 331(ii); Str., VI:XVI; 388(ii). One recalls here the words which Professor John Macmurray quotes from the New Testament as signifying the dynamic conception of God revealed in Christ, over against the static concept alleged to have been introduced into the Gospel by the early theologians under Greek influence. ("My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" John, V:17). Worth noting is the stress that Clement lays on love as the consummation and the crown of all the other virtues.

(2) Dogmen., ii, p. 330.

Hellenistic world is to be sought not in succeeding centuries but among those to whom Clement theologically belongs, then, we may charge John or Paul or the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but Clement we cannot on the evidence adduced. The matter could not be better summed up than it is by Lietzmann when he says of the gnosis which Clement was so anxious to defend, "...gnosticism is not rational comprehension of theological theses or exegetical truths. To possess gnosis implies an attitude to life, and to teach gnosis means to exhibit an example of Christian life. If philosophy had put the exemplar of the "sage" before mankind as the symbol of its work as educator, Clement worked out a new ideal of culture in the figure of a Christian gnostic, an ideal which he based on the Bible and philosophy. Gnosis was not a part of speculative philosophy or magical mysticism; rather it was ethics."⁽¹⁾

The Gnostic, in Clement's own words, "makes up for the absence of the apostles", by the rectitude of his life, the accuracy of his knowledge, by benefitting his kind, and clearing obstacles from the path of his neighbour's soul". Each of us, however, is his own vineyard and his own labourer therein.⁽²⁾

The author of a modern text-book on ancient Greek philosophy⁽³⁾ suggests that Clement's attitude to the lowbrows was that of the dyed-in-the-wool Gnostic. This is but one of several sweeping statements

(1) The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 292.

(2) Str., VII:XII; 462(ii).

(3) A.H. Armstrong, p. 171. Clement, as Lietzmann shows, was intellectual of set purpose. He was writing for the wealthy and educated whose presence in Society and latterly in the Church compelled attention and raised the inescapable question of the relationship between culture and Christianity; but he "was not at all inclined to modify the ethical requirements of religion in order to purchase the friendship of cultured people". (The Founding of the Church Universal, pp. 286-287.)

in a similar vein that ignore many of the main features of the landscape not to mention the details. Clement cannot be regarded as a Gnostic in the sense that Valentinus or Basilides bore the notorious name. Apart from deliberately heretic tendencies in this connection, there were those like Justin Martyr who had already done to some extent what Clement undertook to do. He is not alone in taking up the gnostically Christian point of view. "All the Apologists...are imbued with the idea that...knowledge of God and the world, the genesis of the Logos and cosmos, are the most essential part of Christianity itself." But this conception was not peculiar to them; in the second century the great majority of Christians, in so far as they reflected at all, regarded the monotheistic explanation of the world as a main part of the Christian religion.⁽¹⁾ To the Gnostic thesis that traditional Christianity was a lower religion fitted only for the psychics, Clement presented Christianity as the only, absolutely genuine gnosis, the pure deposit left when the impurities of Gnosticism are exposed and washed away.⁽²⁾ Better than that, if it should be a question of secret gnosis, the Church could cater for such higher knowledge too, in the "esoteric tradition of the Lord and His Apostles", provided that the seeker realized that the entrance qualification, so to speak, was faith.⁽³⁾ But this was not just on the part of Clement

(1) Harnack, *Dogmen.*, ii, pp. 213-214.

(2) Clement, says Lietzmann, was a philosopher and a gnostic, a philosopher at the beginning, a gnostic at the end, but both as a Christian: and he tried to prove to the world that it was in this very combination that the solution of its problems was to be found; at the same time it afforded complete insight into the apparently simple and broadly outlined doctrines of the Church catholic. (*The Founding of the Church Universal*, p. 279.) Cf. also *The Era of the Church Fathers* by the same author where at p. 131 he says that "Clement vanquished the hostile, 'heretical' gnosis by constructing a system of Christian gnosis".

(3) Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria*, ii, p. 74.

or the earlier apologists a dialectical subterfuge. They honestly believed the higher knowledge so attested as the actual fulfilment of the promise that the Holy Spirit would guide the Lord's followers into "all the truth".⁽¹⁾ The Christian gnosis was, in short, the "gift of the Holy Spirit, exercised on the Church's faith and teaching," or "a further stage in the apprehension of Christian truth building upon the data already available to faith".⁽²⁾ "Here..." writes Harnack, "is found, in form and content, the scientific Christian doctrine of religion which, while not contradicting the faith, does not merely support or explain it in a few places, but raises it to another and higher intellectual sphere, namely, out of the province of authority and obedience into that of clear knowledge and inward, intellectual assent emanating from love to God."⁽³⁾ Clement represents the Christian gnostic at the highest level the conception ever has attained; but the ideal was sought after and when arrived at claimed by him as God's clear answer to the humanly unanswered cry of his own age, the final fulfilment of the long-felt desire for "Wisdom". All the light, says E.F. Scott, which had lighted every man from the beginning was, according to this reading of human history, at last gathered up in Christ.⁽⁴⁾

Where Gnosticism in appealing to the cultured reached toward higher things it is gnosis at its best; but in that subterranean, somewhat murky region of its life from which, as Bevan says, a healthy-minded, modern man is all too thankful to escape,⁽⁵⁾ its claim to

(1) John, XVI:13.

(2) Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 395.

(3) *Dogmen.*, ii, pp. 324-325.

(4) *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 129.

(5) *Hellenism and Christianity*, p. 89.

gnosis, in the sense Clement put upon the word, cannot readily be allowed. Some distinction should be drawn between Gnostics like Simon Magus who were no better than charlatans, Marcion who, despite his caricaturish dualism, represents the better part, Valentinus who appears to have regarded himself as a Christian Gnostic and, over against all of them, the gnostic Christian of whom Clement was and remains the outstanding type.⁽¹⁾

The latter, according to some authorities,⁽²⁾ in entering the lists against it, learned and assimilated a great deal from Gnosticism. His contemplated but never completed *Cosmologia* was, it is thought, inspired by Valentinus' celebrated aeonology. He abandons, so it is claimed, the traditional Church eschatology, indulges in speculation and allegorical interpretation, stresses the teaching of Jesus rather than the historic factuality of his life, believes in a spiritual corps d'elite, shows some regard for occult knowledge, and is tinged with ascetism in his views regarding marriage, eating and drinking, etc. H.E.W. Turner goes even further when he asserts that Clement lapses into Gnostic heresy in claiming that the gnostic is specially illuminated and, once so endowed, immune from sin, and that he has direct access to God without the need of Scripture or instruction; that he is a mediator of these gifts to others, like a priest can

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- (1) The history of the Gnosis, writes F.J. Foakes-Jackson, from the profane attempt of a Simon Magus to use the power of Christ for magical purposes to the time when St. Clement of Alexandria conceived the idea of the true Christian Gnostic, is a record of the way in which the gospel consecrated the attempts of mankind to find out God and led them to the knowledge of the Truth through Jesus Christ. (History of the Christian Church to A.D. 461, p. 135.)
- (2) Tollinton, op.cit., pp. 61-63; Harnack, Dogmen., i, pp. 326-327. E.F. Scott thinks that "much that proved of lasting value" was acquired by Christianity. (Op.cit., p. 213.)

forgive sins, and that it is after second conversion that he enjoys these things.⁽¹⁾

Clement's work is really a phase in the development of Gnosis, which is different from suggesting or assuming that both are in substance the same thing. Valentinus and Basilides were Philo's successors in the line of Pythagoras and Plato. Knowing Clement's debt to Philonism, we can appreciate his easy and partially unconscious assimilation of such elements of apparently irregular teaching from the contemporary syncretism.

The intellectual strain in Clement which no one can or need dispute is also criticised as being extremely limited.⁽²⁾ Be this as it may, the intellectual battle was the most serious engagement facing the Church militant in the second century A.D. It was a battle for survival with a subtly conceived, a cunningly deployed and a well-organized attacking force. While it may or may not be permissible to say that faith as Clement has conceived it is no longer the act of self-surrender to God, but a sort of intellectual faculty whereby we realize the unseen, it remains still to be said that such stressing of the intellectual aspect was, for Clement, no veto upon faith as self-surrender, nor a desire for its supersession. One has only to read the extant writings to appreciate the fact. There was in the Church at Alexandria enough of faith, but there was too often nothing else. The intellectuals were, admittedly, a conspicuous minority. They were a minority in the total population of the Graeco-Roman world;

(1) The Pattern of Christian Truth, pp. 398-399.

(2) E.F. Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 168. The author specifies the limitation as all metaphysics; but the East in general and Alexandria in particular just happened to be like that.

they are still in the world today: but in the second century they were a vitally significant minority with vast potentialities for the survival of the new Community in Christ, as have their modern counterparts for the perpetuation of that same community in the present century. Indeed it may turn out, on closer inspection, that the Church did not adequately develop Clement's intellectual strategy and falls still far short of him in that important branch of operations designated the communication of ideas. The Gnostics were a problem to the Church in the second century simply because they raised in relation to this whole question a persistent query which authority had to face eventually, and must face continually, as the "climate of thought" changes from one generation to the next.⁽¹⁾ Nor is there too much point in stressing the fact that Clement's solution of the problem was conditioned by the level of culture, the background of ideas, the special nature of the circumstances of his age. He had to relate his strategy to the immediate situation, if it was to be of real service or practical value to the Church: but the principles that inspired and undergirded it should still, with due modification, be adaptable today.

There is, again, the charge of secularization brought by Harnack

(1) E.F. Scott has said that...the Gnostic problems were not utterly alien to Christianity as is proved by the fact that Clement and others had to tackle them in turn, even though they rejected Gnosticism. "Their work," he says, "consisted to a very great extent in the rebuilding of the Gnostic theology on a new basis, in accordance with the acknowledged principles of the Christian teaching." This meant asserting certain basic things that Gnosticism denied and these were according to (a) Tollinton, the goodness of the cosmic order; human freedom; sane morality; the salvability of the simplices, true scriptural interpretation and the supremacy of the one God of Christian belief and (b) according to Scott, the mediatorship of Christ; equation of knowledge of Him with eternal life and His cosmical significance. (Op.cit., pp. 68 and 280, respectively.)

long ago. He paints a picture of "increasingly articulated forms of Christian officialdom suppressing the free spirit and the charismatic witness" of a more primitive stage of belief: but wellnigh a generation of scholarship separates that judgment from the position as it is seen and assessed today.

Martin Werner,⁽¹⁾ it is true, shares Harnack's general viewpoint that, as he puts it, "salvation as incorporation in the community of the eschatologically elect", the original New Testament idea being is replaced in the dogmatizing process by "a theory of redemption by deification within a sacramental society through guaranteed and physically operated means of grace"⁽²⁾ resulting in an approximation between orthodoxy and Gnosticism, almost amounting to identity in kind and in degree. This (which is no less a theory than the one it criticises) assumes conscious transplantation from the one thing to the other with more than the hint of a suggestion that it need not, or should not have been so; but Bultmann says, per contra, that translation of the Gospel into Hellenistic thought-forms was a necessity;⁽³⁾ and, in H.E.W. Turner's words, the picture sketched by Harnack has, according to recent authorities, been extremely over-

(1) Die Entstehung des Christlichen Dogmas.

(2) Turner, The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 21 (quoting Werner). It must be repeated in defence of Clement, that, unlike the later Fathers of the Church, he had a clear conception of the vital issues and of what he was aiming at.

(3) Das Urchristentum im Rahmen der antiken religionen, Theology of the New Testament, i, pp. 164-183, (even though he is inclined to believe that a degree of dilution was also inevitable in the process). Cf. Turner, op.cit., p. 24. E.F. Scott has really settled the argument when he says, "It mattered comparatively little, and has never greatly mattered, in what intellectual forms the Christian ideas were embodied. The essential thing has always been that the ideas themselves should be Christian." (Op.cit., p. 211.)

drawn. The last-named writer thinks that the real issue as opposed to Harnack's interpretation was that of priorities.

A great deal of this sort of speculation properly belongs to later history when the norm of ecclesiastical orthodoxy had finally crystallized. In the Church of Clement's Alexandria there is no such official norm, heresy, as we construe it from this distance, being merely a deviation still tolerated in the Church, like Pacifism as an unofficial sub-sect in the Church today. The process resulting in what Harnack and others would label dilution is, as a rule, attributed to the so-called "Greek spirit". One is presumably to understand by this that if "the Greek view" had not held sway, or if the Hellenistic mind had shaped itself in a somehow different way, the course of subsequent events for Christendom would have been quite otherwise than what we have lived to see. But is the Greek view, to put the question tautologically, peculiar to the Greeks? Were their acute powers of ratiocination, their scientific aptitudes, in fact, anything but the historically precocious manifestation of an instinct common to all men, and part, in varying degree of course, of the totality of experience for every individual man? Was Christianity not bound eventually to be passed through the filters of reflection, if not in a Greek, then, in some other climate of thought? Those critics who reject the argument of inevitability, are left to account for the process of interpretation or accommodation⁽¹⁾ which, they claim, marked the progress of the Gospel in its transmission from the Hellenistic to the

(1) Cf. Harnack, *Dogmen.*, ii, p. 325, who says that while connecting the Gnosis with the Church tradition, Clement did not shrink from remodelling the latter "because the preservation of its wording was to him a sufficient guarantee of the Christian character of the speculation".

modern, Western world and led to the elaboration of the primitive "deposit" into something ultimately different from what it originally was, or what it was meant to be. The weakness of this position, as has been recently pointed out,⁽¹⁾ is the assumption that the "deposit" is itself a fixed and final quantity incapable of expansion or development in response to pressure from without, and the obvious comment is that the fixity attributed to the datum so conceived was not arrived at until later, and is read back into the Church's past. In any case, accommodation in the spiritual realm is no less essential to vitality and progress than is adaptation to environment in the biological. The "deposit" is not true simply because it is traditional, but only because it bears within itself the indestructible seeds of truth, and can respond with new formal changes in expression to new changes in its environment.

There is another criticism of the deposit theory. The "deposit" already contained within itself, the germs of future heresy,⁽²⁾ the point being proved by the commonly observed fact that Christian theologians who, like Clement, defended the Tradition against sects and heresies, could in succeeding generations be anathematized for their apparent deviations (as Clement was by Photius).

The process, however, had been already set in motion by the mere transition of the primitive Christian Church from a rigidly exclusive Jewish setting into the wider environment, and into that environment⁽³⁾

(1) H.E.W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 8.

(2) Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, pp. 8-9. *Op.cit.*, p. 13. The process works also in reverse. A Macleod Campbell who moves ahead of contemporary orthodoxy finds himself deposed in his own generation, only to be adopted in the next.

(3) H.E.W. Turner, *Op.cit.*, p. 495.

where Judaism, as we have seen, had forsaken the narrow, nationalist ideal. But even before that the Gospel had begun to change its character. ⁽¹⁾ "The risen Lord," writes E.F. Scott, "gave rise to new problems and compelled reflection" on ^{questions} which the earthly Jesus had not even suggested to His disciples and followers, which, according to his own teaching, He could only suggest by leaving them. His words were discovered to contain, in retrospect, much more than his hearers at the time of receiving them had ever realized. ⁽²⁾ Scott comes down on the vital point when he declares that the real issue has been very much obscured by false assessment of the nature of the change which did take place. Bultmann and Harnack think that something weaker and, therefore, lower took the place of the original. Others imagine that the opposite was the case, the simple Gospel being sublimated into the abstractions of Gnosticism. Scott against both of them contends that the real change was in the direction of expansion, something fuller, that is to say, developing out of the first superficial apprehension of the teaching of the Lord. ⁽²⁾ Such power to expand is, surely, the best evidence of life, and it was Life, life more abundant that Jesus came to teach and to impart.

The Hellenism, finally, which is accused of secularizing Christianity (as Turner readily admits) is no longer Hellenism in its pure and

(1) Jesus originally employed the "evanescent categories" of Jewish apocalyptic. The primitive Church adapted the teaching of the Lord to suit its pedagogic and other purposes (J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, pp. 51-52), likewise Paul, John and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Scott, *op.cit.*, p. 281 et passim.) Jesus himself had predicted this fermentive non-static character of the Gospel which he preached. There are no wineskins in this world that are capable of containing the destructive and recreative power of the truth that sets men free. Bultmann agrees with all this, though he regrets the change.

(2) *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 259.

(3) *Ibid.*

simple form, but the diluted version of it usually associated with the times subsequent to Alexander the Great.⁽¹⁾ The penetrative power of Hellenism itself was due to its dilution, says our authority, by alien elements.⁽²⁾ The further point is made by E.F. Scott that if Christianity and Hellenism became, to use a dubiously appropriate word, confused, it was because the Gospel and the thing it utilized were related to some extent.⁽³⁾ He also agrees with Turner that the Church was in the process more like a canoist borne down a swirling stream yet never quite out of control, than like the same man swept on helplessly by the current; and the Church, he considers, while it threw its beliefs into the stream of theological development, nevertheless concentrated on the survival of the intrinsically distinctive ingredients in its own teaching and belief. The Gospel was in continuous control of the material it worked with and stamped on it the seal of its own character and ideals.⁽⁴⁾

In Clement's favour certain things remain to be said on the positive side before we bring this chapter to a close. As the world now knows he failed to complete his task of relating Christ comprehensively and systematically to culture as a whole; but is that failure in the end his inability to control his subject-matter or just the ill-success attending any effort to contain Christ within the strictures of human thought? The question at stake, then and now, is not so much the relation of Christ to culture as the relation of culture to

(1):(2) Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, p. 18. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmen.*, ii, p. 175. "The transformation of religion into a philosophic system would not have been possible had not Greek philosophy itself happened to be in process of development into a religion."

(3) E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 274.

(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

Christ.⁽¹⁾ Clement failed nobly; but he made certain permanently valuable and important gains for Christianity. He helped most effectively to navigate the Ark of God through the threatening storms and troubled waters of his age. He is less concerned with defending society than with conserving sound morals and learning within Christianity at a time when the Church was still outlawed, if not proscribed; his real concern is the culture of Christians rather than the Christianization of human culture; but his greatest contribution to the Church's life and thought both in his own day and in the succeeding centuries was his teaching on unity. There is even for him, in Tollinton's opinion, a manifestation of God's purpose in apparently opposing forces. He is, says the same writer, "no lover of contrasts..."⁽²⁾ He had a genius for conciliating opposites, yet he had "one trouble", as Bigg⁽³⁾ puts it, and this was Gnosticism. Paradoxically, however, his unflagging contest with the latter was first and last in the interests of Christian unity, and the unity of truth.⁽⁴⁾ The sinister variations, self-contradictions and excesses of the Gnostic "retrogression" were a pernicious influence upon

- (1) Culture in Clement's day had crude as well as refined associations. The pagan religion of the age was much more closely bound up with the arts than religion is with us. Could the adherent of the new Faith, asks Clover (*The World of the New Testament*, p. 7), "...accept the art of the past? That meant the statues, the idols, the Aphrodites, the temples; if he rejects these, what could art mean? But if art is rejected, the life of man is mutilated." Clement has indicated his own attitude to this sort of culture in the *Protreptikos*. The Church had yet to learn to do with art what he had done with Greek education, particularly Greek philosophy.
- (2) *Op.cit.*, p. 271.
- (3) *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 115.
- (4) Clement's identification of Jesus with the Logos is a rebuttal of the Gnostic assertion that Christianity was a mere fragment of the universal faith, and that Christ was only one amongst many different emissaries of the Light.

well-to-do but not necessarily well informed men and women in the Church and out of it, and Clement felt it to be his duty to forewarn them and to offer some protection.⁽¹⁾ The Gnostics also constituted a grave menace to the undivided fellowship, the brotherhood that had persisted single-mindedly till his day⁽²⁾ by their classification of individuals according to a graduated, spiritual scale.⁽³⁾ Clement's insistence on the principle of unity is here again the rebuttal of Gnosticism.⁽⁴⁾ Alexandrian Gnosticism, chiefly Valentinianism, was full of mythology and it is obvious from this distance that if Clement had not resisted to the death, the Gospel would have been entangled in the rival system, caught plant-trap fashion and absorbed to its utter oblivion as a distinctive religious system. The relative success of Gnosticism in the early centuries is attributed to the fact that it met

- (1) Tollinton, op.cit., p. 50. Gnosticism, as taught by Basilides, writes Buonainti, was a genuine enough attempt to grasp the nature of the cosmic mechanism and to excogitate the origin of man; but its real menace was that it claimed by a natural, evolutionary process to achieve what the Gospel would not regard as other than the work of revelation. (Gnostic Fragments, p. 31.)
- (2) Cf. E.F. Scott, op.cit., p. 210.
- (3) The classification was into (A) Hylikers, the earth-born; (B) Psychikers, those accepting the common rule and living by faith and law, and (C) Pneumatikers, the elect ones, given over to asceticism and the consecrated life.
- (3) The Church, in the teaching of the Gnostics, was no more than a half-way house between the complete outsiders and those "on the inside". The ordinary Church-members, the psychics, might by adopting Gnosticism become pneumatics (the elect). Clement appears to believe also in a hierarchical arrangement within the Church itself corresponding to the different degrees of the angelic glory. In heaven there are deacons, presbyters, etc., in an ascending scale (Str., VI:XIII; 366(ii)), but where the Gnostics saw only gaps in such gradations, Clement saw connecting links. Clement's beginner may with effort rise through the successive grades to the highest level of all which is likeness to God Himself. He is, if the title is permissible, a spiritual evolutionist. The Gnostics would have had Churchmen believe that they were churchmen, too. It was Clement's action that compelled them to leave the Church eventually.

a deep-seated instinct in humanity for unity of experience and thought. It did this by attempting to relate its religious teaching to the "scheme of things entire". Allowing for mere differences in social and technological development, there is a striking resemblance at some points between the Hellenistic world and the world which we are living in today. Viewed in the light of the traditions he fell heir to, Clement's novel and brilliant effort to strike out new conceptual categories for the restatement of the essential Gospel is nothing short of revolutionary in its way. His adaptation of the Logos principle was a brilliant insight into the nature of the problem of the age as well as into the deepest need of the contemporary world. Its up-to-dateness naturally is lost on us at this remote distance from the actual events, but up-to-dateness was one feature of the strength of its appeal. Discussion of the Logos then must have been rather like discussion of atomic physics now, only the former was more comprehensive of the totality of life. "Belief in the Logos was belief," says Tollinton,⁽¹⁾ "in the unity of the world. In particular, it was the recognition that natural forces and spiritual forces had the same origin and one great end." The "cosmic offices" of the Logos never "come into conflict or competition with His ministry to man's moral needs". It was the "ultimate spiritual unity and intelligibility of the world".

E.F. Scott considers that the chief task of Christianity in our day is to make room for "the new scientific outlook, the new philosophies, the new social order".⁽²⁾ A reaffirmed rapprochement between

(1) Clement of Alexandria, i, pp. 362-363.

(2) E.F. Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries, p. 290.

Christianity and science generally would meet all these demands. A recent statement in this same connection might well be quoted here:

"No theory of man can command assent today unless it takes account of two ideas which were completely unknown to the Fathers of the Church - the evolution of man and the expanding universe. Whatever else we may believe it is abundantly clear that the universe was not made specifically for man, and that there is no inherent reason why the human species should not eventually give way to a different form of life. Failure to grasp the change which has come about in ideas of the nature and destiny of man through the increase in knowledge of human history and human life, and to apply its principle in theology is to court disaster."⁽¹⁾

This is a possibility which Archbishop Ussher would have shuddered to contemplate; but not Clement of Alexandria. He was an evolutionist before, even amongst scientists, evolution was the vogue; at least, he based his teaching on a universal axiom that leaves room for the possibilities that evolution envisages. This sort of mediatorship is valuable, it has been said, in any age; but in ages of historical transition, its value is supreme. Sharp definitions have been blamed by some for the opposition in theological thinking, the opposition of Nature and Revelation; Law and Grace; the Church and the World, the saved and the lost: but Clement has none of these, "He is at once the custodian of a heritage and a pioneer of a new spirit."⁽²⁾ In Christ,

(1) Part of a lecture delivered by W.H.C. Frend to The Conference of Modern Churchmen meeting at Oxford, August, 1955.

(2) Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, ii, p. 67. Marrou in his study of Augustine (supra) suggests that the latter's work preserved what was best in the old culture while carrying it forward to provide the basis and the continuity for the new. Harnack has made a somewhat similar comparison in the case of Clement of Alexandria.

there is for him no Past and Present; that is why he will not set dividing walls between the physical and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, the human and divine. That, too, is why he finds no difficulty in clothing Christ with the thought-forms of his day. It was said earlier in this chapter that Clement's problem is our problem and that the solution he put forward may be not far from our own. Harnack, at any rate, assures us that the permanence and the triumph of Christianity depend not only on its power to free itself from the obsolete adjuncts which were appropriate in their time,⁽¹⁾ but also in its power to unite itself with what he calls "fresh coefficients". Turner has pleaded for a "restated theology".⁽²⁾ If the Church, the latter says, cannot wait for uniformity, she must precipitate the crystallization of new forms for the expression of the eternal truth in Christ. The early apologists, he reminds us, had nothing with which to bridge the gulf but the example of a limited missionary Judaism;⁽³⁾ yet they achieved remarkable results.

Can we take up the challenge and resolve the problem as it represents itself in the twentieth century?

(1) Mission, i, p. 138.

(2) The Pattern of Christian Truth, p. 496.

(3) But this was not as "limited" as such a statement would make out.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

A stage has now been reached in the investigation where we may set down our findings and proceed to ascertain their bearing on the issues raised at the point where we began.

The three writers specially selected for our purpose represent in broad outline the main positions occupied by theologians in the early Church and throughout the Church's history down to the present day - Clement on the right, Irenaeus in the centre and Tertullian on the left. Yet, despite their differences of standpoint, all three have certain things in common whose consideration is important for the conclusions we shall now attempt to reach:

(1) They stand together solidly in upholding the authority of Tradition (sometimes employing the same stock arguments and almost identical terminology). In this they are from the outset partially committed to the theologizing tendency, for the "deposit" already embodies the raw material out of which the Church's fully-developed theology was to grow at a later date.

(2) Quite irrespective of their individually professed, self-conscious attitudes to Greek philosophy (Clement for maximum co-operation, Irenaeus for guarded accommodation and Tertullian for unconditional rejection), they are all, more or less, under obligation to the philosophical traditions and the culture of their age.

(3) All three are opposed uncompromisingly to the Gnostic heresies, particularly in setting what they believed to be the basic unity of reality in its comprehensiveness against the dualism which was the most conspicuous manifestation of the heresies concerned; and

we find this holistic keynote either latent or expressed in every major topic⁽¹⁾ with which they attempt to deal.

For Irenaeus, we have seen, there are two complementary areas in the field of our experience: (a) the world of sensible realities and (b) the world revealed in Scripture (which, for him, is no less real); but here again, both are believed to be but aspects of one fundamentally indivisible, underlying reality. The indissoluble relatedness of reason and revelation is, as he says, what the Church believes and teaches everywhere.

Tertullian pins his faith to the primordial law engraved upon the "natural tables" of the heart, which is the earnest of human freedom, indeed, the very essence of the humanity of man, and which in the course of history has become not so much obliterated as obscured. Without this the ground is cut away from the Church's missionary task. He makes appeal no less than do the others to the sacramental principle.⁽²⁾ For him all things in harmony with Nature are divine.

Unity was always the outstanding emphasis of the Alexandrian school⁽³⁾ of thought. Admittedly, the Greek influence in the latter

(1) In none of them, however, is the problem of evil solved; yet Temple would allow that their conviction that evil may be productive of good contains the latent possibility of the inherent unity and goodness of the world-process as a whole. Vide *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 505-506, 508, 511, 519.

(2) The importance of this emphasis is recognized by leading theologians today. (Vide J. Baillie, *Our Knowledge of God*, p. 121; W. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 483-484.)

Bevan in *Hellenism and Christianity* (p. 87) sees the early Church's most conspicuous recognition of its importance in the content of the Lord's Prayer. He notes Clement's fondness for a book like *Ecclesiasticus*, and points to his interest in mundane, everyday affairs as the best proof of his practical adherence to the sacramental principle.

(3) Indeed, there is a point at which one senses the possibility of Alexandria's becoming the home of a truly ecumenical Christianity in /

tended to stress the idea of absorption into the Absolute, but equally it insisted on the vital role of the Logos in human life and history, and this is for Clement the great unitive, initiative category dominating all his thought, the precondition of the calling of all men, almost without regard to their historical location, either before or after Christ. For him, supremely, culture is one, like reality and truth. The Pedagogue in virtue of the universal covenant relationship gathers up the dispersed media of human culture everywhere. The Logos brings all the scattered fragments of the truth together into their pristine unity. It is even more noteworthy as something which we have to a large extent ignored that in Clement this unitary principle embraces the totality of man's experience, not just the intellect alone, for there are heights of aspiration and attainment where pure thought cannot go.⁽¹⁾ From the first faintest glimmering of God's image in his soul, man climbs up gradually to the faith that consciously aspires, and so to that highest goal of all his striving and his

(3) continued from previous page:

in the modern sense of the word. Butterfield notes the fading out of Christian influence in Asia consequent on its confinement to the Western hemisphere largely under Roman influence (Christianity in European History, p. 6 and context). Dillistone, commenting on this, says of the Latin language that it left no open roads for new adventures of ideas and was "inadequate to translate the Hebrew-Hellenic dialectic contained in the Scriptures and in the developing Christian faith". (Christianity and Communication, pp. 78-79.)

- (1) Cf. R. Kroner's "The Religious Function of Imagination" (also "How Do We Know God?") where faith is treated as religious imagination. This side to Clement is in flat contradiction of Harnack's idea that at Alexandria faith was equated with possessing the right formula, that knowledge represented the supreme good, and that spirit was understood as that which knows. For Clement, gnosis alone is like the spark kindled by the sun's ray, in comparison with the sun's own light and heat. The mere philosopher is like Newton's child picking up pebbles on the seashore of the boundless sea of knowledge.

seeking where faith finally becomes sight.⁽¹⁾ The metaphysical at a certain point in his spiritual promotion fades into the mystical, the state of nature yielding the state of grace, and both in the last analysis yielding the state of glory, as Dr Baillie expresses it.⁽²⁾

2. The place of this unitary principle in the early Church's missionary outreach is of no less importance here.

Pagan religion, Gnosticism, Judaism and Greek philosophy were all actively concerned, as we have seen, and eager in Clement's day to stake their respective claims.⁽³⁾ The renaissance of Greek philosophy in

- (1) Clement comes very close to Kant's suggestion that the way of salvation is a true knowledge of God which is reducible to faith. There is, in this sense, no distinction between philosophy and religion, between reason and belief. Revelation has a universal frame of reference, and faith, in some degree, is the possession of all men. This sort of faith is knowledge; this kind of knowledge is faith. If Clement's interpretation is true to reality, there must, as Dr John Baillie indicates, be (a) some sort of progressive revelation in human experience and (b) progress regarding what is revealed within the Christian life, (a) representing revelation in nature, and in the reason and conscience of men, (b) revelation in the occurrences of history, and through prophetic witness, with the latter uniquely mediated in the person and work of Christ. Despite Brunner's efforts at refinement of the Barthian position the latter, in the end, remains substantially the same. (Vide J. Baillie, "Our Knowledge of God", pp. 17ff.)
- (2) This is the crux of the modern controversy from the Barth/Brunner side of the debate. For some of the best modern contributions in support of Clement's view, vide W. Temple, Nature, Man and God, pp. 5-10, 292-300, 306-317, and J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, pp. 36-43. Temple charges the anti-liberals with stubborn watertight-compartmentalism, Baillie suspects them of retreating into their "wholly other" world to avoid facing up to awkward questions.
- (3) According to Marrou, even classical education set itself up as an ersatz religion, and as a rival to the Faith. With the collapse of ancient beliefs, culture became, for many, this writer tells us, the only absolute. Epitaphs reiterate the deceased's distinctions in the academic world. The service of the Muses was even believed to be a guarantee of the reward of entrance after death into (the very high-brow, it appears,) Elysian fields. (A History of Education in Antiquity, pp. 100-101.) Clement may be ringing the changes on such contemporary ideas when he says that Heaven is full of the philosophers of God in whom there is no guile.

particular, though it could not satisfy, had, nevertheless, stressed the deep, inner needs of men. Exploitation of the total situation on the lines that Clement and the Alexandrians had laid down offered a rich harvest for the Christian enterprise. Refusal to grasp the opportunity in the interests of the Faith would pass in any age for a denial of faith in God's good purposes for mankind.

If anything has emerged so far from our investigation it is the striking similarity between certain movements of thought discernible both in those days and in our own. We find ourselves as Christians in comparable circumstances witnessing, as we now do, the revitalization of numerous popular heresies, and the phenomenal revival of those ancient, East-Asian religions claiming the allegiance of large numbers of men and women everywhere. Most worthy of note is the remarkable extent to which such resurgent Faiths incorporate ingredients common to them and to the syncretistic Gnosticism of the second century⁽¹⁾ - idolatry and idealism, sectarianism and universalism, faith and fatalism, the crudest forms of superstition (and sometimes obscenity) mingled with intellectual acumen and the refinements of philosophy. This sudden quickening may be the consequence of contact with ecumenical Christianity.⁽²⁾ At any rate, such an emerging situation is not likely

(1) Indian absolute monism in some of its main teachings is akin to Gnosticism. Indeed, Kraemer describes it as "one of the great representatives of gnostic thinking, as vast, ambitious and all-inclusive as e.g. Manichaeism in the past". (Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 116.)

(2) Kraemer's opinion is that for the first time since the Constantine victory in A.D. 312 and its consequences, the Christian Church is heading towards a real and spiritual encounter with the great non-Christian religions. The two main factors contributing to this dénouement, he maintains, are (a) the presence of the younger churches in the midst of those religions and (b) the forcing of the existence and vitality of the latter into our field of vision as an outcome of the increasing interdependency of the world. (Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 20.)

to be met with much hope of success by a "wholly other" attitude,⁽¹⁾ for, "other sheep I have", says Jesus, "which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd".⁽²⁾

An Indian writer on the subject of Hinduism's recent self-discovery as a world-proselytizing faith, forecasts her likely chances of success

- (1) The more reasonable approach seems that advocated by A.G. Hogg. Vide his *The Authority of Faith* and *The Christian Message to the Hindu*.

Luther, by reason of his consuming interest in the East/West encounter in his day, particularly in relation to Islam, anticipates our present situation quite remarkably, and would remind the thoroughgoing Barthian that the non-Christians also have their virtues and their "gleissenden Heiligkeit". The uncompromising Barthian attitude must, at least, contend with the actualities as well as the possibilities inherent in the ecumenical situation.

Miss Dorothea Stephen in her recent study, *The Gita in Life*, sees something like affinities of thought between the Gita and our Fourth Gospel, and concludes her research by saying that the author of the former knew that "...for the redemption of Indian society a personal, ultimate reality was so necessary, that if he did not exist he must be invented, condensed out of legend, myth or philosophy, given a date of a sort and a place of a sort in the actual world" (pp. 97-98).

A less well-known writer on missiology declares that "all 'religion' (which includes all outer forms, Western and Eastern alike) is under the judgment of God": and that all forms alike are "neutral vessels, which can be filled either with men's imaginings or with the true Word of God or with such compromises as we in our partial regeneration may contrive". (J.F. Butler, *The Theology of Church Building in India*, p. 4.)

Miss Stephen says again, "...India speaks and we of the West listen; and again Quis Separabit?...Will philosophy or religious profession? Not now; the world is too small...Islam is a half-way house...Buddhism gives us a blank." For Communism "the Ultimate is nothing"... "If we are to think of the Ultimate Reality at all, our choice lies between Hinduism and Christianity". (Op. cit., p. vi.)

D.G. Moses differs from Miss Stephen in regard to Buddhism for he maintains that "...the later history of Buddhism is a clear proof that the religious relation has a natural tendency to define itself in personal terms", a necessary deduction from the personal "I-Thou" categories which Martin Buber utilizes. (Vide *Religious Truth and the Relation between Religions*, p. 27.)

- (2) John, X:16.

from what he describes as her ability to "modernize"⁽¹⁾ herself, a development of Hindu religion in which Ghandi played an important, if not a creative part. Can Christianity, we might ask, without ceasing to be its true self do something similar? Can we confront the world-view created by ever expanding intellectual horizons with an unexpanding faith? The need, both from the human and the divine-human side is obvious enough. Today, writes Dillistone, no less than in the second century, man is still seeking to obtain a total picture of the universe; he still craves to know the secret of its unity, its universal harmony; he still seeks a way out of the imprisonment of terrestrial existence into the world of life and light,⁽²⁾ and, says Kraemer, "The Apostolic outreach implies the certainty of a given and knowable truth, superseding and transforming all truth by which man may live..." The Christian Church "must define its relation to the various manifestations of religious life and experience. This implies that it has to define also its relation to the various aspects of culture as a whole, and has to indicate the motives and roots of its missionary character".⁽³⁾ As to the authority for such an undertaking, William Temple has affirmed with characteristic incisiveness that belief for the Christian is not ultimately in creeds but in the living God.⁽⁴⁾ This is not intended as a disparagement of credal formulae as such but of the ultimacy ascribed to any historically-fixed

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- (1) Although other religious systems may not be final from the Christian point of view, there must, as Bishop S. Kulandran indicates, be frontiers along which Christianity can encounter and fulfil or transcend them and so win them over for Christ. (Resurgent Religions, p. 12.)
- (2) Christianity and Communication, pp. 97-98.
- (3) Op.cit., p. 18.
- (4) Nature, Man and God, p. 322.

formulation of that deepest faith by which the churches live.

3. Harnack, referring to Irenaeus, speaks of his "happy blindness" to "the gulf lying between the Christian tradition and the world of ideas" that prevailed in the latter's time, seeming to regard the gulf in question as a sort of desirable English Channel set unbridgeably between the island fortress of the second century Church's faith and the Continental land-mass of Hellenic speculation. There was, as Marrou points out, a profound gulf between the latter and Christianity, and the man of antiquity, he emphasizes, had to make an effort of renunciation and of self-transcendence before he could in any real sense be converted to faith in Christ, had to realize the limits and the ultimate vanity of the culture by which he had previously been sustained.⁽¹⁾ This, as is evident, Tertullian did, verbally at least, in no uncertain terms. Clement also, in the end, makes the **same** renunciation, only he does it more constructively. He turns the claims of pagan culture and philosophy by subordinating them to the higher claims of Christ. Our modern dilemma springs from the extreme anti-liberal attitude whose cumulative effect over the years is that at the present day the gap has grown into a great gulf set between, not only in the religious but in every sphere of life, no less between man and man than between the modern man⁽²⁾ and God. Only a Christianity commensurable with the total problem and the totality of existence can redress the loss involved, only a re-apprehension of "the intention to realize the universal community

(1) A History of Education in Antiquity, p. 319. (Italics my own.)

(2) This is well put by Kraemer, The Communication of the Christian Faith, Ch. IV.

which is", according to Professor John Macmurray, "the reality of human life".⁽¹⁾

To men of Clement's time whose growing plight was a deep-seated sense of their spiritual poverty, their intellectual bankruptcy and their displacement in the world, the Greek key-conceptions were ideally suited to convey to them Christ's power to meet their need. The pagan paradigms were like run-down batteries which no human effort at revival could induce to yield fresh light or power. Clement set out to demonstrate to the pagans without disowning their convictions how and by Whom the needed power could be supplied. The living God was his (and Irenaeus') chief concern. They were not unconscious of the dialectic value of the words and ideas they employed in this encounter,⁽²⁾ and deliberate use of them was not for the purpose of compromising the Faith with paganism, but the very opposite.⁽³⁾ Clement's apologetic involved modes of thinking that tended less to lead than, in other hands, to be allowed to go astray. Such accretions as resulted were not mechanically responsible per se for

(1) The Clue to History, p. 122.

(2) The debased literary art of the Hellenistic world was even taken up by the Christians, according to Labriolle, in order to score off a vitiated paganism. In the dialectic struggle this take-over was viewed as "a means to action, a lever to work on souls, to turn them away from error and impel them towards the truth. (Vide Labriolle, *Histoire de La Litterature Latine Chretienne*, p. 14.) There is a similarly vast, but much more neglected challenge to the Christian Church in the literature field today.

(3) Early Christianity was not only outside the sphere of Greek philosophy, but also appealed mainly to the classes which philosophy did not reach, and to a standard that philosophy refused to recognize. (Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals*, i, lvii.) Faith was the rallying-cry and "Maran atha" the all-sufficient key. (Op.cit., i, lviii, quoting Hatch, p. 124.) Celsus, cited by Origen, could ridicule the Church with his long-remembered jibe: "Let no educated man enter, no wise man, no prudent man, for such things we (Christians) deem evil; but whoever is ignorant, whoever is unintelligent, whoever is simple, let him come and be welcome." (*Contra Celsum*, iii, 44.)

subsequent developments in the Church's theology. Warning is given in the New Testament against the risks involved in subscribing to an unexamined faith. The dangers were there in the second century, no doubt, but so were the danger-signals, plain enough to see. To this consideration must be added the further fact that the Gnosticism held responsible was not purely negative. It was, at its best, the only constructive effort in the first Christian centuries to enlarge the place of the Church's tent, apart from merely strengthening the stakes, to face up to adult problems and relate the teaching of the Gospel to current scientific views. It seems highly probable that with its interest in numerology and recurring emphasis on its golden rule, as one might call it, "Seek and ye shall find," it remarkably anticipated the activities of Science in our day. Apart from that, it rendered really valuable service to the Church in paving the way for the transition of the ancient world from paganism to Christianity.

But part of our problem still remains, for modern Christians continue to perpetuate the dualistic modes⁽¹⁾ of thinking which the early apologists encountered in joining issues with their pagan adversaries. The problem took noticeable shape much later when the Church herself had become a power to be reckoned with and a *modus vivendi* was considered desirable between her and the Constantinian Roman world. This does not, however, absolve us from present responsibility. We have to reassess the problem and make some attempt at a solution, and the latter, we believe, still lies promisingly and

(1) Temple's solution is what he calls Dialectical Realism in relation to the whole gamut of dualistic modes of thought, realism being made a basis for the spiritual interpretation of the universe. Vide *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 485-486, 474-475, 498, 490 and 293-298.

purposefully along the lines that thinkers like Clement of Alexandria marked out for the early Church, and for the Church today.

What do we really mean when we oppose "philosophy" as we mostly do to "faith"? In what essentially does philosophy consist? Where does it take its rise? It springs out of man's confronting the mysterious universe of which he also is a part. It is the outcome of his effort to grapple with the manifold of being, to grasp its meaning and its purpose in relation to himself, in terms of matter of fact, on the one side, and of value on the other, its basis being the postulate of the ultimate reasonableness of things.⁽¹⁾

In the religious sphere as well, man, lacking complete knowledge, must take many things on trust (even the ultimates that lie beyond his power to see), yet with the sense of purposiveness that such trust creates in him he may and does proceed to live what would prove to be a meaningless existence otherwise. Is there no common link here with the scientific mood, when in its less pragmatic and empirical pre-occupations it succeeds in rising to awareness of the Alpha and Omega of its own activity, and of the total life of man?⁽²⁾ Philosophy is strictly speaking the activity of the human mind as regards the objects of thought. Science is that activity directed towards so-called objective reality, the phenomena comprising the space-time continuum, as science thinks of it; but there is ultimately a limit which is impassable to both modes of experience, whether separately or combined, and when the limit has been reached, faith at that point enters in to

(1) Cf. A.N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, p. 5.

(2) "Science," says Nels Ferre, "is a great act of sustained faith." (*Philosophy and Religion Face the Future Together*, *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. xxxiii, No. 4, Oct., 1953.)

yield "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". Certain words of William Temple are well worth repeating here:

"Theology," he says, "which is the science of Religion, starts from the Supreme Spirit and explains the world by reference to Him. Philosophy starts from the detailed experience of men, and seeks to build up its understanding of that experience by reference to that experience alone. Its inevitable and wholesome kinship to Science inclines it to account for everything by the 'lowest' category that will in fact account for it; Theology begins with the 'highest' category of all and fits in the 'lower' categories in the most orderly hierarchy that it can devise in subordination to that 'highest' principle."⁽¹⁾

The two approaches do not, however, presuppose a different terminus ad quem. The two diversified activities are not the activities of two entirely different men, but two modes of man's ultimately identical experience. Nor can there be two different worlds, the world revealed to science and the world revealed to the great prophetic souls. If that were actually so, the very possibility of science and of truth itself should be denied.⁽²⁾

Behind man's scientific efforts, his speculative activities, behind the phenomena of his spiritual experience and the forms of his cultural life, a common, ultimate reality exists. This is the basic

- (1) The alternative to dualism, however, is not monism in any of its forms, but, according to A.A. Bowman, a duality in unity. "...There is 'no reason', he says, 'why reality should not include two irreducible modes of being without sacrifice of coherence'." (A Sacramental Universe, p. 338.)
- (2) "Today," says Ferré, "we need a new, common enterprise of science, philosophy and religion." (Philosophy and Religion Face the Future Together, The Journal of Religion, Vol. xxxiii (supra), p. 253.)

fact for which Clement primarily and preeminently stood.

We introduced the problem with Professor John Macmurray's thesis that the Church's theology is originally a simple amalgam of Christian experience and Stoic philosophy. It is difficult to reconcile his other statement that the emergence of theology proves that Christianity had succumbed to dualism with one of the facts we have brought to light, namely, that it was primarily to protect the Tradition against dualism that the first serious attempts at a systematized theology were made. Stoicism is singled out as the misleading influence in this assumedly calamitous departure from the pristine purity of faith. Yet, at the same time, Macmurray goes on to maintain that, in the end, whatever interpretationⁱⁿ given it, the true Hebraic leaven of the Gospel remains embedded in Western European life and thought. But how could it ever have become so while it continued pent up in its Palestinian environment? This sort of argument rests on the contention that even yet Christianity is separable from its historical accretions, reducible to some sort of non-speculative residuum, a pure filtrate, so to speak, and that the best prospect of the Gospel's full and unfettered course as a redemptive influence in history lies in its thorough decontamination from the tinctures of Greek thought. To this we can only say beforehand that such a consummation, however devoutly it ^{in some quarters} be wished, is, considering all the data and the details, at this point in time neither desirable, nor for that matter possible, and that even if it were it could not produce the results that are claimed for it.⁽¹⁾ Let us,

(1) Dr John Baillie's view is that our problem is not so much to disentangle what is valuable in the old presentation...as rather to interpret and rearrange the data in a way which will better bring out their true significance. (The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity, p. 33.)

however, look at the proposition from a different angle once again, if only for the sake of being fair to the other side and just to the argument. The form in which it has been most commonly expressed is to say that in the situation that resulted from the impact between Greek philosophy and Christianity, the Greek element was accorded the preeminence, while the Hebrew element was given second place if not practically obscured. The main (some would say the only) cause of this is held to have been the employment of Greek philosophic forms by the early Christian apologists in their concern to launch the Gospel into the Hellenistic world: but neither will this do, for surprisingly one finds that the Hebrew ingredient was actually the origin and the model of the method which the Church subsequently appropriated and pursued.⁽¹⁾

Butterfield in a recent study⁽²⁾ draws attention to this fact. Israel, he points out, lay across the highways of the pre-Christian world, right at the centre of a nexus of international communication and exchange. Hers was an axial situation, to borrow Jasper's vivid metaphor.⁽³⁾ She took the thought-moulds of the surrounding races for the development of her religious life and thought, but filled them with meanings that were peculiarly her own, and always with uncompromising emphasis on her characteristic exclusiveness. The Church trod exactly the same path in the succeeding centuries.⁽⁴⁾ There is

(1) Cf. Dillistone, *Christianity and Communication*, p. 61. This was the way that history had already worked out, for example, through the Jewish Diaspora. (Op.cit., p. 75.)

(2) *Christianity in European History*.

(3) *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. His book is largely an appeal to Christian theologians to explore all the avenues of communication in our day.

(4) Butterfield, op.cit., pp. 12-13. Cf. Lamont, *Christ and the World of Thought*, p. 126.

the same exclusive note with the same technique for the transmission of the message into the world-environment. It would seem, therefore, that the thesis to which Harnack,⁽¹⁾ Bultmann and others have continued so unswervingly to adhere is robbed of at least two of its main premises right away. We have in the New Testament, as known to us, to begin with, no absolutely pure residuum of "Galilean Christianity", whatever that may be; and, secondly, the Hebrew ingredient of the Gospel, on examination, is not itself found to be untainted by that type of borrowed element in virtue of which the Gospel is held to have been side-tracked and transformed.

This discovery, however, does not yet rule out the possibility of our problem being solved. Harnack's conception of an "urchristentum" does embody a germ of truth, which is best expressed in question-form. Is there, in fact, an irreducible⁽²⁾ in Christianity, even as it exists for us, with all its historical appendages today? Butterfield in the study just referred to thinks there most definitely is. For him the "irreducible" is to be sought for in the total situation to which

- (1) Harnack complains that the Christianity of the Fathers is a selection from tradition; but the selection was in the interest of what Harnack is so anxious to conserve, became in fact essential in order to save what remained of the original from being utterly obscured. He also accuses Irenaeus of failing to explain how unexamined faith can be sufficient for most Christians, but even the faith that most Christians possess is never wholly unexplained. It starts from some sort of teaching or instruction at some stage in their career.
- (2) Dillistone regards as "irreducibles" the Jesus of History/Christ of Faith element, also the "story of the saving acts of Jesus, the acts by which He was declared to be the Saviour and Lord of the whole historical process", also the pattern of "humiliation and glorification through death and resurrection constituting the central meaning of every mythology". The "severely simple", he confirms us in believing, will not do. The very terms "Christ" and "Jesus" require some historical interpretation. (Christianity and Communication, pp. 92, 95, 98 and 91 respectively.)

Christianity gave rise. The basic fact on his interpretation was the complete change in the human situation, the radically transformed attitude⁽¹⁾ which Christianity produced in the minds of men towards nature and the world around them, in regard to history and human destiny. This is the new wine which old wineskins have never yet been able to contain, and this it is that enables us to see with ever greater clarity, the fallacy that underlies Harnack's dogmatic theory.

The demand that we go back to some primordial fount of faith presumes a locus in a given time and place, anchors the Gospel to a geographical and historical situation. What could be more unlike the true intention not of the Gospel only, but of Him Who was and is its source, and indeed its very self? Nothing imaginable could be more opposed to God's purpose in history as the Bible sketches it than a localized, temporalized and limited Gospel of this type. On such a reading, Stephen and Paul and Jesus himself died for a wild delusion or at best for an empty hope. We have reason, however, to be thankful that the facts prove otherwise. Even the theories and theologies, the fencings with words and the scientific formulae are finally in the sole and central interest of that Life which, as John says,⁽²⁾ was, and

(1) Any divine communication which is to come meaningfully to men, writes Dillistone, must relate itself somehow to the existing structures in the human situation. The process, he points out, must be seen also as continuous (p. 59). Within this pattern of communication Judaism brings its archetypal names to have them remade in Jesus, and so of Hellenism. In this sense the change is in the mythical systems of the pagan environment. The latter's ideals are asserted to be Jesus and, thus, a bridgehead is created for the full impact of the Gospel on the other environment. This amounts to a radical transformation of the pagan's attitude to the verbal or other symbols which for him interpret the total meaning of his life, provided the process of transference is not deceptively superficial. (Op.cit., pp. 49-51, and Ch. IV.)

(2) John, I:4.

we can now say, is, the Light of men.

Christianity may have gone back to Greek philosophy, as Butterfield remarks, in order to explain itself to the Graeco-Roman world. It may have been prepared, as St. Paul was, to become all things to all men, but the overriding and consuming impulse was the transmission of the light, the master-motive that of bringing all men to a saving knowledge of the truth as revealed in Christ.

Clement, we feel, made a valuable contribution to this very vital end. He lived and moved, as Kraemer recognizes, in the weltanschauung of his time. He strove for a Biblical gnosis and in this he helped to overthrow a syncretistic Gnosticism. In the view of the same writer, he deserves closer study and merits more attention than he has hitherto received, with some solid prospect of advantage to the Church in the things that concern her Faith. He has, of course, his limitations, one of which, according to Kraemer, is the too great prominence attached to Greek philosophical categories. The facile conjunction of Greek culture and Christianity is, it is also claimed, brought about to some extent at the cost of ignoring central elements of the Biblical revelation. Other deficiencies alluded to are the devaluation of the salvation-significance (Heilsbedeutung) of the Cross, the individualization in the Stoic manner of the Christian faith on the basis of the Logos-theology,⁽¹⁾ with consequent modification of the Biblical Kerygma and some distortion of the truth-value of pagan philosophy and its

(1) But Clement is at one with Reformed Protestantism in teaching that the imago dei is a likeness not a portion of God (as the Stoics taught) in the human soul. He is not far from Dr John Baillie's idea of the image as representing an inference from our experience of present human nature, rather than the result of something which happened in the past. (Vide Our Knowledge of God, p. 22.)

accompanying world-view.⁽¹⁾ Kraemer's contention that the stress throughout is not on a new life-relationship with God so much as on a rational knowledge of God⁽²⁾ is not quite just to all the facts, for Clement is much concerned, as we can see, to emphasize the practical morality⁽³⁾ of the gnostic "Way" in Christ. We can endorse, however, what is said regarding Clement (and Tertullian as well) that, "each in his own way achieved a great act - great because they were members of a persecuted Church in a world proud of its culture and wisdom - in that they forced the pagan world to converse on speaking terms with Christianity" demanding "from the classical world a radical revision of first principles on the basis of Christ the Logos",⁽⁴⁾ ...which "was not only a self-evident element in their spiritual climate" - like our idea of personality - but..."made a fruitful and victorious communication possible in the discourse between Christianity and culture".⁽⁵⁾

(1) Kraemer, op.cit., pp. 152-153.

(2) Religion and the Christian Faith, p. 153.

(3) In one part of the Jung Codex the activities of the word are asserted to be in an ascending scale: (1) Faith, (2) Love, (3) Works, "For herein life consists". Clement's conception of the true gnosis is very similar. (The Jung Codex, p. 46.)

(4) Op.cit., p. 156.

(5) Op.cit., p. 152. Kraemer reminds us that our problem in the field of missionary apologetic lies very largely in the fact that "Today there exists no common philosophic or religious paradigm or measure in any sense"... "This lack of a common sense and measure of direction is, in fact," he assures us, "the cause of the incredible spiritual confusion in our day." (Op.cit., p. 20.)

Can the essential Christian message, asks Dillistone, be separated from its Jewish context? If not, how much of this must be retained? Can additions be made from other cultures so as to make the essential Gospel meaningful in a new environment? Or "stripped of its historical antecedents and of its cultural determinants" can it then be "sent forth naked and unashamed into whatever new environment is open to receive it?" (Christianity and Communication, pp. 19-20.)

There is an element of real temptation in any encounter of this kind, and such an encounter faces the Church at the present day. We need not, however, permit the fear of such temptation to hold us back. This was one essential of the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints" that Clement lived and steered his course by, we feel sure. If the Gospel carries within itself its own inherent truth, we can with confidence expose it to the scrutiny or the contact of modern science, resurgent religions or the world's philosophies. Clement nobly showed the way. It is for us to undertake the admittedly more complex yet the no less vital task of comprehension, correlation and communication in our day. Man's chief end in this sense, according to Dillistone, is to be realized on the basis of the Incarnation as "a personal movement of self-fulfilment through self-identification, of the enrichment of spirit through involvement in matter, of the increase of energy through patient submission to forms of organization", the final goal of the whole process being "a truly Christian integration of life".⁽¹⁾ As this was realized through Christ in relation to the myths of the Mediterranean world c. 200 A.D., so, Dillistone claims, it may be realized in the twentieth century in relation to modern science, "man's final attempt to fashion a myth of creation".⁽²⁾

The Graeco-Roman world was dominated by Greek rationalistic thought. To speak to the man of that world in any other universe of discourse was dialectically impossible.⁽³⁾ There was a longing, too, amongst enlightened Christians for something of their own, equivalent to pagan philosophic culture, a "Sacred Science" which, in Marrou's

(1) Op.cit., pp. 99-101.

(2) Op.cit., p. 84.

(3) E.F. Scott, *The Gospel and Its Tributaries*, p. 167.

opinion,⁽¹⁾ appears as Gnosticism. One fact is clear, the latter says. "Christianity was born in Hellenistic Palestine and developed in the midst of Graeco-Roman civilization - and it was everlastingly affected by it. Even when the Gospel is preached to the Chinese or the Bantus it is impossible to forget that it was first written in Greek."⁽²⁾ The facts would also seem to indicate that Christianity in the early days made little or no progress where Greek culture was unknown.

Secondly, in the opinion of Labriolle, while there was deep and profound penetration of Christianity by Hellenism in all related spheres, the interaction, he contends, was in the nature of mutual continuity. The two great spiritual powers which considered themselves irreconcilable did, in fact, become reconciled, but Christianity had at the same time sufficient vitality of its own not to suffer deformation. The results of all this are regarded as entirely beneficial. "It is thanks to this fusion," declares Labriolle, "that even men who are strangers to the Christian faith are nevertheless willing to accept the fundamental principles of the morality it enjoins, since the legacy of the past is also contained therein."⁽³⁾ Was Christianity to throw away all that man had striven to achieve in the way of intellectual gains...indeed, all the disciplines that make men civilized? Such a step, in his view, could only spell stagnation for the Faith and for the whole course of human thought.⁽⁴⁾

Thirdly, in recognizing that the Church did borrow from the rivals

(1) A History of Education in Antiquity, p. 326.

(2) Op.cit., p. 318.

(3) Histoire de La Litterature Latine Chretienne, pp. 43, 45.

(4) Op.cit., pp. 29-31.

she overcame, Legge also has this to say. If at some future time investigation should show that Christianity owes something to her forerunners and rivals, the argument against her Divine origin would not thereby be necessarily strengthened. "That, in the course of her development, she acquired characteristics which fitted her to her environment would be in strict conformity with the laws which appear to govern the evolution of all institutions; and if the Power ruling the universe chooses to work by law rather than by what seems to us like caprice, such a choice does not show Him to be lacking either in wisdom or benevolence."⁽¹⁾

Finally on the question of the inevitability of the developments with which we have been concerned, we may quote Marrou once again. "Even a religion that is the prototype of all revolutionary movements"... "cannot escape the influence - which is all the deeper the more unconscious it is - of the civilization it grows up in." He refers to the widespread phenomenon of "cultural osmosis", the life-giving fluid of civilized society surrounding men and institutions and permeating them, even when they are unaware of it, even against their will.⁽²⁾ So unavoidable was the Church's task of meeting and accommodating the incoming intellectuals, Labriolle suggests, that the correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul was probably invented so as to combat indirectly the repugnance educated pagans felt for the Epistles in point of form.⁽³⁾ Jaeger has pointed to the unintended reversal of the aims and ideals of the pagan Schools, and has indicated how remarkably this redounded to the advantage of the Church.⁽⁴⁾ Even

(1) Forerunners and Rivals, ii, pp. 360-361.

(2) Op.cit., p. 319.

(3) Labriolle, op.cit., pp. 31-32 and footnote 2, p. 32.

(4) Paedeia, ii, pp. 11-12.

Harnack⁽¹⁾, in the case of Irenaeus, allows the argument from inevitability.

Accordingly, on the strength of all the facts brought to light and the evidence adduced, the following are the conclusions that we feel compelled to reach:

- (1) The liberal response, as made by Clement, was (with certain reservations) in keeping with the facts.
- ✓ (2) By and large and in the long run, it was beneficial in character.
- ✓✓ (3) It was on the whole providential, and, in that sense, inevitable, as part of the Church's role in history and of man's final destiny.

(1) Dogmen., ii, p. 246.

APPENDIX (I)
CLASSIFICATION OF TERTULLIAN'S EXTANT WRITINGS

(A) PRE-MONTANIST

<u>Grouping</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
APOLOGETIC	197	Ad Martyròs
		Ad Nationes
		Apologeticus
	212	De Testimonio Animae Ad Scapulam
ANTI-GNOSTIC	212f.	De Praescriptione Haereticorum (2)
		Adversus Marcionem
		Adversus Hermogenem
		Adversus Valentinianos
		De Carne Christi
		De Resurrectione Carnis
		De Scorpiace De Anima
MORAL AND DISCIPLINARY	up to 206	De Oratione
		De Baptismo
		De Patientia
		De Poenitentia
		De Virginibus Velandis
		Ad Uxorem
	211	De Cultu Feminarum
		De Corona Militis
		De Idolotria
		De Exhortatione Castitatis

(B) FULLY MONTANIST

" "	213f	De Fuga in Persecutione
		De Monogamia
		De Jejunis
		De Pudicitia
		Adversus Praxeam

(C) OTHER WORKS

GENERAL	till 218-222	(3) De Spectaculis
		De Pallio
		Adversus Judaeos(unfinished)

According to Greenslade, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. V, pp. 21-22
entitled De Praescriptionibus Haereticorum by Greenslade (op. cit., p. 21). The
designation above is that of the Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina I, p. 187.
Also in Greek. Quasten thinks a Greek original underlies the De Virg. Vel. and
the De Cor. Mil. also. (Vide Patrology, ii, p. 243).

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